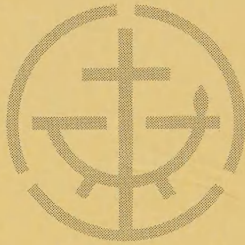


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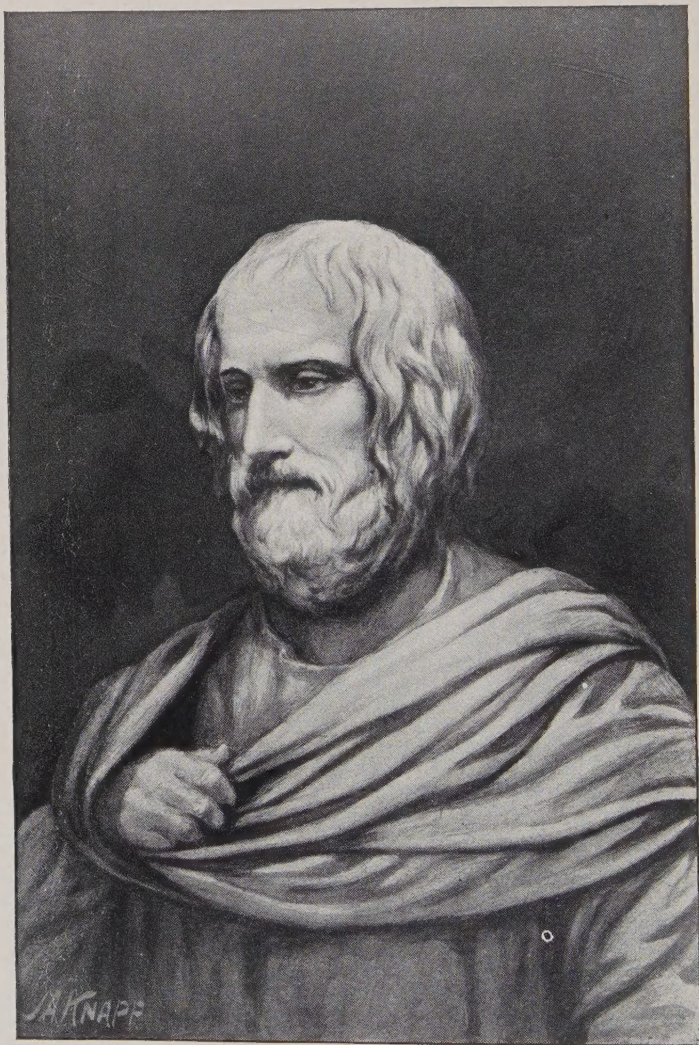












EURIPIDES

(After the Herm in the National Museum, Naples.)

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The  
Adorers of Dionysos  
(Bakchai)

Translated from the Greek of

EURIPIDES

With an Original Interpretation of the  
Myth of Kadmos

by

James Morgan Pryse

Illustrated by J. Augustus Knapp

LOS ANGELES

JOHN M. PRYSE

LONDON

JOHN M. WATKINS

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## PREFACE

### Concerning the Practical Utility of Myth-Lore, and the Unreliability of Empiric Translations

This work, while complete in itself, naturally follows my version of Aischylos' *Prometheus Bound* as a companion volume. For in its interior sense, though not in its outer expression, the myth of Kadmos, as superbly presented by Euripides in the *Bakchai*, partly supplies the place of the lost *Prometheus Unbound*. Kadmos, Dionysos and other characters in this great drama are descendants of Io, the heroine of the Promethean myth; and the birth of Dionysos and the final exaltation of Kadmos to a place among the Blessed Immortals hold the same meaning as the freeing of the bound Titan. Therefore I have linked the two tragedies together, and bring the whole subject to a fitting conclusion by appending to this volume a brief treatise on the perfective work, which is the esoteric theme of both myths, and which will prove to be of real utility for those who, not content with theoretical knowledge, desire to make a practical application of it. When Antisthenes was asked what advantage he had derived from philosophy, he replied, "The ability to be acquainted with myself." It is only through the perfective work, which is applied esoteric philosophy, that a man may become acquainted with his real Self, the God within him, personified in these myths by Prometheus, the Bound, and Dionysos, the Free.

The dialogue of this drama presents no difficulties in translation, and I have turned it into English blank verse very literally. In this work, as in *Prometheus Bound*, I have rejected the antiquated style which seems to be

traditional with most translators of Greek tragedy, and have used modern English, retaining, however, some of the inflections which have fallen nearly into disuse. The English language, originally a Low German dialect, and at one time highly inflectional, has borrowed words from many other tongues and has been stripped of most of its inflections, so that it now has a heterogeneous vocabulary and a very primitive structure. The latter has been progressively simplified, and no doubt thereby improved; but when in the process of simplification such words as "thou," "wast" and "ye" were dropped the language certainly suffered a loss of clearness, dignity and refinement. Indeed, when a translator necessarily brings it into juxtaposition with the highly wrought Greek he can hardly fail to notice that English is as yet in the rough, a mode of speech developing into a language.

It was said by Milton (whose theological epics, too dull ever to be really readable, and now rarely if ever read, are disfigured with inaccurate classical allusions and other errors) that rhyme is "the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre." But the three types of rhyme, namely, alliteration, assonance, and correspondence of sound in final syllables, or true rhyme, are modes of emphasis as natural, universal and pleasing as metre, which is simply rhythm conventionalized. The lyrics in the dramas of Aischylos and Euripides, though technically classified as blank verse, abound in beautiful rhyming effects. They are *songs*, and to give them the English song-form, in translation, they should, by rights, be rhymed.

For the lyric portions of the drama I have used rhyme

as the nearest English substitute for the subtle vowel modulations of the Greek. Some passages in the lyrics are marked by peculiarities which make a literal translation of them simply impossible. They are replete with mystical terms pertaining to the Dionysiac religion that have no English equivalents, so that their meaning can be rendered only by interpretative paraphrase. Again, in other passages, Euripides, a profound philosopher, versed in spiritual realities, and therefore having an aversion to the superstitious beliefs current in exoteric religions, could not, it is evident, refrain from expressing that aversion; but necessarily he had to be cautious, and so he has worded his unpopular sentiments with curious brevity and obscurity. These passages I have construed freely; for to expand the wording and bring out more clearly the half-suppressed statements is only doing justice to the scholarly poet and mystic, whose impatience with the superstitions of the ignorant and the equally unfounded speculations of the pedants roused against him the enmity of the exoteric herd in his own day, and in later times often led to his being misunderstood and misrepresented, although true mystics have always acclaimed him one of the greatest exponents of sacred truths. And because he thus occasionally veiled his meaning, some of his odes, taken superficially, appear to have little connection with the rest of the drama; and for this he has been criticized. But when the inner significance is discerned, they will be found to be strictly relevant.

I have used by preference the poetic form "Bakcheus," instead of the more usual "Bakchos" or the Latinized "Bacchus."

In this work, as in *Prometheus Bound*, I have tried to avoid everything that smacks of the school-room and the sheepskin-bound lexicon; but the importance of understanding the odes in this play justifies a brief departure from that course. The second strophe of the entrance-song of the Chorus is a hymn to Dionysos, and it strikes the key-note of the whole drama. Omitting the concluding lines, which relate to the return of Dionysos to Thebes, it reads:

ὦ μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαίμων  
 τελετὰς θεῶν εἰδὼς  
 βιοτὰν ἀγιστεύει  
 καὶ θιασεύεται ψυχὰν·  
 ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύων  
 ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν  
 τά τε ματρὸς μεγάλας ὄρ-  
 για Κυβέλας θεμιτεύων,  
 ἀνὰ θύρσον τε τινάσσων  
 κισσῶ τε στεφανωθεὶς  
 Διόνυσον θεραπεύει.

"Eternally blessed is he who, knowing, by the grace of his divine Self, the perfective labors of the Gods, leads a consecrated life, and joining with all his soul an occult fraternity in the mountains becomes a Bakcheus by the holy purifying rites of initiation: observing the established Mysteries of Kybele, the Mighty Mother, and waving the thyrsus upward, he is crowned with ivy and serves Dionysos."

This is not strictly a literal translation; for, as said,



a literal translation is impossible. To gain a clearer insight into the meaning of this wonderful hymn it will be necessary to consider separately the technical words contained in it.

*Maκar*, in its religious signification, as here, connotes the divine peace, bliss and immortality of the Gods. The word was used substantively for the Gods and the souls of deified men: both were termed *Maκares*, and also *Daimones*. The *Daimōn* of a man is his spiritual Self, his inner God. Thus the *Daimōn* of Sokrates was the divine Self of him, and not an obsessing genius or "spirit." Therefore *eudaimōn* applies to one who is approved by his inner Self, and so is supremely fortunate. The word *eudaimonia* is thus used by Plato and Aristotle to denote true and complete happiness. Bakcheus (Dionysos) mythologically personifies the divine Self of man: hence the initiate in the Bakchic Mysteries, having become one with that Self, was said to be a Bakcheus.

Precisely as the verb *basileuein* signifies to be king (*basileus*), to have the powers of a king, to reign, so *bakcheuein* signifies to be Bakcheus, to have the powers of Bakcheus, to prophesy, etc., and not merely, as in a colloquial sense, to speak or act like one who is frenzied. Plato explains that there is "a frenzy which is the special gift of the Gods," and says, rather facetiously, that "prophecy is a frenzy, and the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses of Dodona, when out of their senses have conferred great benefits on Hellas, both in public and in private life, but when in their senses few or none." He adds that "he who has part in this gift, being inspired and duly out of his mind, is by the operation of the

purificative rites and perfective labors of initiation made whole and delivered from evil, future as well as present." Here he uses the same terms, purificative rites (*katharmoi*) and perfective labors (*teletai*), that Euripides does; the purifications pertain to the Lesser Mysteries, and the perfectings to the Greater Mysteries.

*Thiasuesthai* is to join a *thiasos*, to be initiated into it; and a *thiasos* is primarily a religious company or fraternity, here, as shown by the context, an occult organization.

Kybele, the Mighty Mother, is a personification of the divine World-Soul, and her Mysteries embrace everything in the subjective worlds.

The thyrsus is a graphic emblem of the "Breath that goes upward to immortality," which in the *Fourth Gospel* is called the Paraclete, "the Holy Breath," and "the Breath of Truth." It is the sacred occult Power which confers seership and leads to spiritual rebirth.

So the hymn may be interpretatively paraphrased thus:

"Supremely blessed is he who, by favor of his spiritual Self, gains knowledge of the sacred powers in man whereby he may perfect himself and attain union with that Self. To that end he consecrates his life, and enters in soul one of the Schools of the Mysteries hidden in mountain solitudes. There, having purified his psychic nature, and having aroused his inherent spiritual potencies, he becomes an initiate: to him are unveiled the marvels of the spiritual worlds, and wielding his holy power, crowned and robed in glory, he serves the Self Divine."

This sublime hymn, breathing solemnity in every word, and revealing the very heart of the Dionysiac religion,

runs as follows in Dean Milman's empiric translation:

“Blest above all human line,  
Who, deep in mystic rites divine,  
Leads his hallowed life with us,  
Initiate in our Thyasus,  
And purified in holiest waters,  
Goes dancing o'er the hills with Bacchus' daughters.  
And thy dark orgies hallows he,  
O mighty Mother, Cybele!  
He his thyrsus shaking round,  
All his locks with ivy crowned,  
O Dionysus! boasts of thy dread train to be.”

This translation conveys correctly hardly anything that is in the text, but adds irreverent statements that are not in it. The phrase “mystic rites divine” has no technical or definite meaning. Thiasos (Thyasus) is left untranslated. The text says nothing of “waters” or “daughters”; and the picture of the newly baptized initiate “dancing o'er the hills with Bacchus' daughters” (who have no existence outside the translator's imagination) is fantastic in the extreme. The *orgia*, “sacred works,” or “Mysteries,” of Kybele were not “dark orgies” in the sense evidently intended. The simple phrase “he serves Dionysos” is bombastically changed to “boasts of thy dread train to be,” thus giving an entirely false conception of the character of Dionysos and his followers. Unquestionably the good dean intended no irreverence, and it is not to be expected that a priest of a modern exoteric cult should comprehend the esotericism of an ancient “pagan” religion; but I submit that his version of this

Dionysiac hymn is far from the spirit of the original. It is as if a flippant and irreligious scoffer were to take the fine old hymn, inspired by true spiritual longing,

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee,”

and impiously turn it into horrifying burlesque:

“O jolly old rock, with a cleft in your side,  
In which I would playfully like to hide.”

Blasphemous, surely; but so, unwittingly, is Dean Milman's “dancing o'er the hills with Bacchus' daughters.” This hymn to Dionysos reveals the ultimate spiritual purpose of the Mysteries, which is the subject of the drama, and by thus degrading its deep solemnity into shallow gaiety the meaning of the drama as a whole is utterly falsified. It matters little that the one hymn is expressed in terms of a religion still in existence, and the other in terms of a religion no longer extant; for the truths variously expressed in the ancient religions did not perish when those religions had reached the end of their respective cycles, as every exoteric faith is fated to do. The spiritual truths of the past are identically the spiritual truths of the present and the future. Time can not swallow that which is eternal.

JAMES MORGAN PRYSE.

## PART I

### INTRODUCTION

The Meaning of the Myth of Kadmos, and of the Drama,  
The Adorers of Bakcheus.



## INTRODUCTION

Wherein Is Set Forth the Recondite Meaning of the  
Myth of Kadmos

### CHAPTER I

#### Why Kadmos Was the Light That Failed

More than twenty-three centuries ago Euripides, one of the greatest of tragic poets and a learned philosopher, in his seventy-third year wrote the *Bakchai*, which in profundity of meaning and splendor of diction is unequalled by his other great dramas. The subject of this tragedy is taken from the myth of Kadmos, which branches off from that of Prometheus and forms an episode in the great myth of Dionysos. The *Bakchai* were the followers of Bakchos, also named Dionysos, the God of Seership and reputed founder of the sacred Mysteries. Those who were initiated in these Mysteries were called *Bakchoi*, since the initiate was said to become one with his God, and therefore himself a *Bakchos*. In the drama the Chorus of Maidens from the East represent the true Adorers of Bakchos, the *Bakchai*, and so the noun, as the title of the play, is in the feminine. Dionysos is the Sun-God, a poetic personification of the Immortal Self, or Spiritual Mind, of man. Therefore his virgin adorers are said to have come from the East, the region where the sun rises. They are the Daughters of the Dawn, the rays of the sun at daybreak, mystically. Only a small portion of the story of Kadmos is told in the drama; but it is necessary to consider the myth as a whole

in order to understand the inner meaning of the events dramatized by Euripides.

The meaning of a genuine myth which treats of the realities of the inner life is easily to be discovered by any one who is aware of those realities; it is hidden only for those who have little or no knowledge of things spiritual and psychic. Therefore the interpretation of a myth, while serving to clarify and formulate truths for those who have gained more or less understanding of them, will not be very enlightening to those who are wholly unfamiliar with the subject.

Before taking up in detail the story of Kadmos, let us make the acquaintance of the more prominent characters in these related myths, and identify them with the principles in man's nature which they respectively personify. For though they necessarily appear in the myths as separate personalities, they are in reality all summed up in individual man.

Prometheus, "the Foreknower," who brought to man the sacred Fire, is the Immortal Spirit in man, the Monad which enters into bondage by incarnating in the material world.

Io, "the Wanderer," the priestess of Hera who is beloved by Zeus, is the incarnating soul of man.

Kadmos (from the Babylonian *Qadmu*), a descendant of Io, is "the Light from the East," the awakening of the true Mind of man.

Dionysos (the Babylonian *Diwunisi*), "the Great Judge of Man," who first appears in the Promethean myth as Epaphos, "Touch," the son of Io, conceived from the Breath of Zeus, and next as Herakles, the son



of Zeus who performs the twelve great labors of initiation and delivers Prometheus, and then again in the Kadmean myth as the son of Zeus and Semele, a daughter of Kadmos, is Prometheus himself, the Self of man that has to undergo "woes infinite and toils incredible" before achieving final liberation from the bondage of physical existence. Dionysos is, in fact, Prometheus Freed. Yet, paradoxically, the Divine Self is always "the Free," and it is only through its lower self, the man as he is on earth, that he is in bondage. Therefore that lower self, to gain liberation, must become one with its "Free Father" who is in Heaven, the Spiritual World. That is why the worshippers of Dionysos are said to have aspired to become one with him, thus differentiating him from all the other Gods. Hence the follower of Dionysos who had achieved this mystic union could truly say, "I and the Father are one."

It is not by belief in, or worship of any of the many "Gods" sprung from human fancy, not even when one of them comes to be regarded as the one and only God, that man gains emancipation from earth-life. Nor does he upon the death of his physical body pass into "eternity," or enter into an endless state of heavenly bliss. Whatever religion he may adhere to, and whatever dreams he may indulge in during the dream-state after death, he must of a certainty return to earth. Whether he "believes" in evolution or not, he is caught in its mighty current, with a long series of earth-lives behind him and many others to come. Only two courses lie before him, and he may make his choice of them: he may either move along slowly with the vast herd of

humanity, who will reach the goal of perfection only after ages of mundane existence, or he may ascend by a short-cut, difficult indeed to climb, by purifying his lower nature and putting forth all his intellectual and intuitive powers in the pursuit of spiritual wisdom, aspiring to attain the mystic union with his "Free Father," his own deathless Self.

In brief, the story of Kadmos is that of a man who became weary of the petty earthly existence to which the consciousness of the herd of mankind is limited, and resolved to devote his whole soul to the quest for wisdom. He made himself morally pure, subduing all his lower propensities, and acquired four of the five great virtues, including "righteousness." The fifth virtue, "holiness," would have brought him under the direct guidance of his Spiritual Self, and given him the key to the divine wisdom. But he failed. His righteousness hardened into self-righteousness, whereupon he became a bigot, and his baser nature, which he had placed under restraint, became rampant. Then followed his terrible downfall; and this it is that makes Euripides' greatest drama, for all its beauty and the many touches of humour with which he has skilfully brightened it, replete with horrors. But though Kadmos fails in the perfective work, his spiritual Self, "the Judge of Man," while calling him strictly to account, gives him assurance that when, in future earth-lives, he has atoned for his bigotry, he shall finally succeed and become a deathless initiate in the Divine Mysteries. The story in full, as told in the mystifying language of the ancient myth-makers, may now be unfolded and its meaning fathomed.

## CHAPTER II

### How Kadmos Founded the City of the Seven Gates

Now, the Virgin Io, a priestess of the Heaven-Goddess known to the Greeks as Hera and to the Phœnicians as Anna, conceiving from the Holy Breath of Zeus, the Lord of Heaven, brought forth Dark Epaphos, known also as Dionysos Melanaigis, "Dionysos, Wearer of the Dark Goatskin," so called because he was born in the sign of the Goat-fish, at which time the nights are longest and the sun gives least its light. Epaphos had a daughter, Libya, and she, united with Poseidon, Lord of the Sea of Life, bore two sons, Belos and Agenor. Here it is that the myth of Kadmos and Dionysos branches off from the myth of Prometheus and Herakles. For the descendants of Belos culminate in Herakles, the deliverer of Prometheus, while the descendants of Agenor culminate in Dionysos, the Free Father.

In connection with the zodiacal signs which are respectively assigned to them, these mythological personages are shown in the following table, and also in the more detailed diagram given herewith.

Aquarius	Capricorn	Sagittarius	Scorpio	Libra	Virgo-Leo
(Zeus) Io	} Epaphos—Libya	(Poseidon)	{	Belos	{ Danaos 5 Daughters
					{ Aigyptos 5 Sons
				Agenor	{ Kadmos 5 Daughters
					{ Kilix (5 Sown Men)

How closely the details of the myths fit in with the zodiacal scheme is apparent from the diagram. It shows why Io was said to be a priestess of Hera, and Athena was named as the patron Goddess of Kadmos. Zeus,

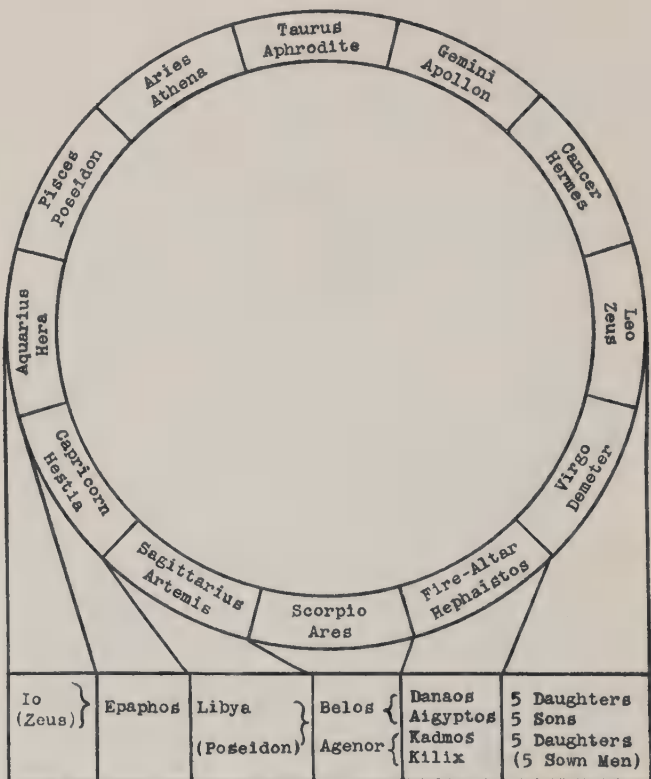


Diagram Showing the Descent of Kadmos.

the Water-pourer (pictured in Aquarius), does not in this myth pour the Water of Life upon Io, but instead breathes upon her the Breath of Life. Her immaculately conceived son, Ephaphos, is born in Capricorn, over which sign Hestia, the Goddess of Hearth and Home, appropriately presides, while Hermes, the Guide of Souls, is the regent of its polar sign. Poseidon, Lord of the Psychic Sea and the "fishes" (disincarnated souls) that exist therein, is fitly mated with Libya, who bears the name of the "dark" continent and is placed in the sign of Artemis, who presides over birth, as her twin brother and polar opposite, Apollon, does over death.

Danaos is said to have had fifty daughters, and Aigyptos fifty sons; but in each case the number should be five, the affixed cipher being merely a blind. Kadmos is said to have had four daughters and a son, but the myth clearly indicates that the latter should be a daughter, Polydora.

Agenor, "the Manly," is but another name for Ares, the God of Strife; and the wife of Agenor, who was Telephassa, "the Far-shining," represents Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love. Kadmos, their son, as the Light from the East, personifying the dawn of true mentality, figures in the myth as a man, one of the herd of humanity, at that stage of his individual evolution when he has begun to think positively about the realities of life, stimulated to thought by the hard struggle for existence and the yearning for something finer and nobler than the petty concerns of material life. Thus Kadmos is indeed the son of Strife and Love.

Kadmos, the man thus quickened to thought, on consulting the oracle at Delphi was commanded by Apollon to follow a certain wandering cow until it fell down from fatigue, and at that place to build a city. Accordingly Kadmos followed the cow, and when it fell to the ground exhausted by its wanderings he was moved to sacrifice the cow to Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom. So he sent his servants to the well of Ares, near by, to fetch water for the sacrifice. But the red Dragon of Ares that guarded the well killed the servants. Kadmos, aided by Athena, slew the Dragon, and then, by command of Athena, sowed its teeth in the ground. From the teeth sprang up a host of armed warriors, who immediately engaged in conflict among themselves and fought until there were only five survivors. These five, who were called the "Sown Men" and "Sons of the Dragon," became the ancestors of the inhabitants of Thebes, the seven-gated city which Kadmos built.

When translated from the symbolic language of the myth-makers this fantastic story reveals profound truths. The wandering cow is identical with the "horned heifer" Io, "the Wanderer." In the terminology of the myth-makers the majority of mankind, being intellectually and spiritually immature, and therefore not fully individualized, but living, cattle-like, a sort of collective life, fenced in by conventionalities, swayed in the mass by common impulses, and moving in bunches under the leadership of the various originators of systems of opinionism, are designated as "the herd." The term was not applied contemptuously; it merely expresses the fact. A cow, being

a member of the herd, and reproductive of her kind, symbolizes the reincarnating soul. The cow in this myth has left the herd, and wanders alone. Kadmos, the man who is slowly evolving the individualizing philosophic reason, which is by no means the same as the unspiritual reasoning mind so highly regarded by the herd, reincarnates until his soul becomes utterly weary of the narrow range of earthly experiences. He has begun to think for himself, and the formulated religious opinions of the herd no longer satisfy him. Then it is that by divine decree he must develop the higher intellect. For the walled city with seven gates which he is to build, and of which he is to become the king, is simply the brain, with its protective skull, which has seven orifices. Only when the soul reaches this stage of world-weariness does a man really begin to think. The contented member of the herd rarely has actual thoughts; he has emotions, opinions, beliefs, notions and fancies. But when a man becomes dissatisfied with things as they are, his soul being satiated with the monotonous fare of sentient existence, he is impelled to reflection, and looks for a true solution of the problem of human life. So Kadmos resolves to devote his soul to the pursuit of wisdom; this is figuratively expressed by the sacrifice of the wandering cow to the Goddess of Wisdom. Naturally, when a man makes this resolution, his thoughts and aspirations are first directed toward psychic knowledge rather than spiritual. Water is a term for the psychic element, and it is this psychic knowledge that Kadmos tries to obtain from the well of the God of Strife. His first attempt results in

failure; for the well is guarded by the red Dragon, which symbolizes Desire as the seat of the emotional and passionate nature. Then Kadmos performs the first great work in the quest for wisdom: he slays the red Dragon of Desire. That would seem to end all difficulties from that quarter. However, it does not.

When a man sets out to explore his inner nature and discover there the divine wisdom (and he will never find it elsewhere) he inevitably stirs up a commotion within himself. Though he has ceased to long for things material, selfish desire asserts itself in his psychic nature and stays his progress. He must slay it before he can gain access even to the fountain of psychic verities; and when, after a terrific struggle, it is killed out, its more subtle energies, symbolized by the teeth of the Dragon, remain and work outward, so that all that is good and all that is evil in him must come to the surface, and the struggle is renewed. But this time the man is less concerned in the contest: he may stand aside, as it were, and let his virtuous and his vicious tendencies fight it out among themselves; for if in the first conflict he has really slain the Dragon, the good will certainly triumph over the evil. So Kadmos watches the battle of the Sown Men, and welcomes the survivors to the city he is about to build; for they represent the five chief virtues, which are, according to Greek philosophy, sound judgment, fortitude, self-control, righteousness, and holiness. These correspond also to the five life-breaths through which the mind energizes, and which in their cosmic synthesis are the Breath of Zeus, the Lord of Life. So the red Dragon was not wholly bad; for Desire is in fact the



Will debased, and the Will in its highest aspect is the spiritual force through which the higher Mind acts. The five Sown Men are called earth-born, because they represent the virtues evolved by experience and discipline during many incarnations on earth.

Having thus harmonized his lower nature, Kadmos receives from Zeus a wife, felicitously named Harmonia, and by her has four daughters, Semele, Agave, Ino and Autonoe, and a son, Polydoros. But, as the sense of the myth requires five daughters, it is evident that Polydoros should be Polydora, a daughter. The change in sex was made, no doubt, to give Kadmos a male successor in the pseudo-historical version of the myth. Although Euripides, in one of his earlier dramas, mentions Polydoros, in the *Bakchai* he makes Kadmos state unequivocally that he never had a manchild. Twice in the drama Euripides says that the kingship of Thebes was conferred directly by Kadmos on Pentheus, the son of Agave, thus contradicting the "historical" claim that Polydoros succeeded Kadmos as king. Clearly Euripides, knowing the inner meaning of the myth, ignored the spurious Polydoros. The five daughters of Kadmos, like the five daughters of Danaos, symbolize the five subtle elements, or psychic energies, mystically termed Æther, Fire, Air, Water and Earth. It will be noticed also that there is the same correspondence between the five Sown Men, sons of the Dragon, and the five sons of Aigyptos. Kilix, the brother of Kadmos, dwelt in Kilikia (Cilicia), which derived its name from him; and from the caves of Kilikia came the giant Typhon, who stands for the same principle in human nature that the red Dragon symbolizes. Alike

they signify the vital forces, the five inferior "fires," which pertain to the zodiacal sign Libra (originally the Fire-Altar), the Regent of which is Hephaistos, the Fire-God. To this sign, which has the heart-centre for its correspondence, may also be referred Kadmos himself, as well as Cheiron and Palamedes, whose names, from *cheir* and *palamē* ("hand") covertly signify the five fingers and the five "fires." But when these "fires" ascend from the heart to the brain they come under the sign Leo, of which Zeus is the regent. Thus Kadmos, "the Light from the East," comes from the heart, but he upbuilds and reigns over the brain. To him, therefore, belongs the cerebro-spinal system, while his wife, Harmonia, has the sympathetic nervous system, her five daughters, the psychic elements, being related to the five great ganglia of that system. When a man reaches a certain stage of psychic development he becomes aware of these elements and forces of his nature, and by means of them awakens the inner senses through which the psychic world may be known.

The story of each of the daughters of Kadmos, excepting Semele, is that of a virtue perverted to its antithetic vice. But the story of Polydora, "the Richly Dowered," has not been preserved, since she was metamorphosed into a son. She represents the element Earth, which contains a portion of each of the four higher elements from which it is derived; so Polydora is appositely named. Inasmuch as the five daughters of Danaos were wedded to the five sons of Aigyptos, it would naturally be expected that the five daughters of Kadmos would likewise be mated with the five sons of the Dragon; but

in this feature the myth has been disfigured by being made into "history," and only Agave is said to have married one of the Sown Men, Echion. Yet the life-stories of the daughters indicate that they correspond to the virtues personified by the sons of the Dragon. Semele, representing Æther, having holiness for its correspondence, is a Virgin, and her Son, Dionysos, by Zeus, is born prematurely. Agave, Fire, becomes the wife of Echion, one of the sons of the Dragon; their son, Pentheus, "the Mourner," personifies gloomy self-righteousness, righteousness perverted. Ino, Air, married Athamas, self-control; but in a fit of frenzy he threatened her with violence, whereupon she leaped into the sea, carrying with her her son, Melikertes, and became thereafter a sea-deity, Leukothea, the White Goddess. This, however, took place after the downfall of the House of Kadmos, since Ino figures in the tragedy poetized by Euripides. Autonoe married Aristaios, bravery; their son, Aktaion, was a braggart, and because he boasted that he was mightier in the chase than Artemis he was turned by her into a stag and was devoured by his own hounds. The daughters of Kadmos are related to the zodiacal signs as follows:

Signs:	Virgo	Fire-Altar	Scorpio	Sagittarius	Capricorn
Goddesses:	Demeter	Athena	Aphrodite	Artemis	Hestia
Daughters:	Semele	Agave	Ino	Autonoe	Polydora
Elements:	Æther	Fire	Air	Water	Earth

The names Semele and Demeter alike signify "the Earth-Mother," and are variants of Gaia, the Primordial Substance, or Æther. Agave copies after the warlike Athena, Ino after the foam-born Sea-Goddess Aphrodite, and Autonoe after the Moon-Goddess Artemis. All the

Gods and other personages of these myths are related directly or indirectly to the zodiacal symbolism, and apart from it they can not be correctly classified or properly understood.

The drama opens with the return of Dionysos to Thebes, the city of his birth. But before continuing the story of Kadmos it will be profitable to study closely the mythical birth of the Sun-God; and to this subject the following chapter will be devoted.

## CHAPTER III

### How the Sun-God Was Born

Now the birth of the Lord Dionysos was on this wise. When Semele, the mortal bride of Zeus, was found with child, his immortal consort, Hera, being jealous, assumed the form of Beroë, the aged nurse of Semele, and instigated the mortal bride to persuade the Father to appear to her in his full glory as King of the Immortals. So Semele, with feminine guile, gained from Zeus the promise that he would grant a favor that she would ask, and he confirmed his promise by the dread oath of the river Styx. Thereupon Semele made her request. But when the Father came to her in all his splendor, arrayed in his vesture of light, even as the blaze of lightning, Semele was consumed by the celestial fire thereof, and in dying the mortal mother gave birth to the immortal Dionysos. Then the Father caught up from the deathless fire his Son, thus born untimely, and with golden clasps secured him in his thigh, making thereof a masculine womb, whence in due time the infant was born again. Therefore was Dionysos called also the Twice-born. And the learned Euripides records that the divine babe was baptized in the fountain of Dirke. Then Hermes took the Son of Zeus and Semele to a far country, that he might be safe from the wrath of Hera, and there the child grew and waxed strong, becoming full of wisdom; and Euripides says of him that he is the mightiest of the Gods and has precedence in the banquets of the Blessed Immortals.

In modern works on mythology, especially the more superficial ones written for the general public, emphasis is always laid upon the fact that Dionysos, better known as Bacchus, was the God of Wine, and that drunken orgies were a feature of his worship by the ignorant rabble. But scholarly and unprejudiced writers lay emphasis upon the more important facts that Dionysos was the God of the Prophets, or Seers, wine being only a symbol of spiritual exaltation, and that the Mysteries (*orgia*) of Dionysos constituted the real religion of Greece, pure and free from superstition, having nothing in common with the beliefs and practices of the exoteric mob. On the authority of Euripides and others it is known that the true followers of Dionysos were forbidden to drink wine or eat meat. For eating the flesh of slain animals and poisoning the brain with alcohol are not conducive to spiritual wisdom.

Dionysos, whose name signifies "Judge of Man," is the Spiritual Self of man, which is not incarnated, but overshadows, so to say, the reincarnating Psychic Self, and passes judgment upon it after each of its lives on earth. Thus man is only imperfectly incarnated; the perfect incarnation can take place only when he has become one with his Spiritual Self, and thereafter he need incarnate no more. Now, the Free Father can not reach or influence the incarnated man save through the subtle psychic energies, and these are latent until the man has purified his lower nature. Kádmos personifies the individual who has performed this first work in spiritual regeneration, and his daughters represent these psychic forces, Semele being the daughter favored by Zeus and



## DIONYSOS

(After the Herm in the National Museum, Naples.)





giving birth to the Sun-God. The name Semele is akin to Gaia, and signifies the primordial Earth, the Æther, and not the element Earth which is its final differentiation. In Zeus, the Life-God, are synthesized the five "life-breaths," the highest of which, his "full glory" in which he appears to Semele, is "the Breath that goes upward to immortality." The latter, in conjunction with the element Æther, becomes the mystic "ray" of psychic light which illumines the brain during a certain state of spiritual exaltation, energizing the sacred "third eye," known to physiologists as the pineal gland. The latter is the organ of spiritual vision; but it is also much more than that. In this myth it figures as the "thigh" of Zeus, which Euripides also terms a "male womb." For the word "thigh" is used here, as in *Genesis* xxvi. 2, and elsewhere in ancient writings, for the generative centre. The myth here admits of two parallel lines of interpretation, one that has to do with the spiritual illumination of the intellect, and one that deals with the gestation and birth of the "solar body," the deathless form which takes the place of the mortal body when the perfected man frees himself from the round of physical rebirths. The story of Kadmos follows the former line of interpretation. inasmuch as he failed in the work of regeneration, even after glimpsing the Light from the East; but, since the two subjects are inseparably connected, it becomes necessary to inquire into the meaning of the "solar" rebirth, or birth of the Sun-God.

According to Greek mythology the Universe itself, and all beings and things in it, from the highest Gods to the least of creatures, are "born"; and birth is not the

beginning of that which is born, but is its issuance from one world into another, either higher or lower, as the case may be. Thus by physical birth the soul of a man returns from the subjective world to the objective. His objective body, the physical, and his subjective or subtle body, the psychic, are both mortal, and he therefore keeps passing back and forth between these two worlds. When the soul, purified by the discipline of its many earth-lives, evolves a body composed of the primordial substance and the pure "solar fire," it is born in the spiritual world, and is free from the cycle of reincarnation. It is by the action of the subtle psychic elements and energies, the mystic "fires," that this spiritual, immortal body is formed, and the sacred brain-centre is its matrix. It may seem strange that the functions of vision and gestation are ascribed to the same organ. However, the sense of sight and the mental faculty of visualizing, or producing subjective images, are closely associated. A sculptor, for instance, must visualize a form before he can model it in the clay. Further, the pineal gland and the generative centre are directly correlated physiologically; and it is for this reason that spiritual regeneration is absolutely impossible apart from celibacy. All the organs of sensation and of action in the body have their corresponding governing centres in the brain, but in reverse order, so that the mental man is, as it were, inverted.

Hera, the jealous wife of Zeus, is the lower World-Soul; and Beroë, the venerable nurse of Semele, is Gaia, Earth, the divine primordial Substance, mythologically the Bride of Heaven, Ouranos. By impersonating her spiritual archetype, Hera brings about the death of

Semele and the untimely birth of the Son of Zeus. Thus it is signified that the man Kadmos, having by means of the mystic "ray" awakened the inner senses, and thereby entered into the psychic realm, was deceived into thinking that he had attained to the spiritual world. By this delusion his further progress was arrested; yet he had reached a point in the steep uphill path where none can stop with safety, but must either climb sturdily upward or slip back and fall. So Kadmos ingloriously fell. The dauntless courage that had so far sustained him degenerated into vainglory, his righteousness shrivelled to self-righteousness, and the crowning virtue of holiness was unattained. The braggart Aktaion and the bigot Pentheus personify respectively the vainglory and self-righteousness of Kadmos; while Dionysos, the Son of Zeus, was taken away by Hermes to a far country, whereby it is signified that the Spiritual Self can not manifest itself in man until he has made himself pure and holy.

But the story of Kadmos does not end with this failure. Dionysos returns to Thebes; and though Kadmos thereafter passes through many and great tribulations, as told by the poet in this tragedy, Ares, the God of them who strive and struggle, delivers him and establishes him in the land of the Blessed Immortals. As the drama begins with the return of the Son of Zeus to the city of his nativity, this inquiry into the meaning of the myth will now take up the story as dramatized by the poet.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Festival in Celebration of the Sun-God's Return

Though a Greek tragedy was not divided into acts and scenes, like a modern play, it had a regular construction which served the same purpose by affording pauses in the narrative at appropriate points, marked by choric songs. For the convenience of the reader I have divided the text of this tragedy in the modern way, and have added explanatory headings to the divisions. These divisions will be followed in this analysis of the interior meaning of the drama.

*Prologue.* Dionysos, having in distant Eastern lands established his sacred Mysteries, whereby he may be manifested to mortals as a God, returns in semblance of a son of man to Thebes, the city of his birth, accompanied by a band of Oriental Maidens, his disciples, to whom he has imparted prophetic powers. Standing near the tomb of his mother, beside the River Ismenos, into which flows a stream from the sacred spring of Dirke, he recounts, in a monologue, how he returned to Thebes, and has been despised and rejected by the inhabitants thereof. Agave and her sisters had invented and circulated a vile slander concerning his mother; and Pentheus, Agave's son, to whom Kadmos had given over the kingship of Thebes, denied the divinity of Dionysos. Therefore Dionysos had cast a spell upon the Thebans, so that the daughters of Kadmos and all the women of Thebes, under the delusion that they were disciples of the Prophet-God, had assumed the fawn-skin robe and the

thyrsus, peculiar to his followers, and had fled to the glens on the slopes of Mount Kithairon. Having made this introductory recital, Dionysos calls out to his true followers, the Maidens from the East, and bids them march around the palace of Pentheus to the loud music of their timbrels. As he leaves the scene the Oriental Maidens (the Chorus) make their entrance.

The daughters of Kadmos, as already explained, are the psychic energies in man. The Maidens from the East personify the forces of the spiritual Mind, the true Self, represented as the Sun-God. So this scene represents the dawn of a day which is to be celebrated in honor of the Sun-God, who has returned. But though he came unto his own, they that were his own received him not. It should be kept in mind, in reading the play, that all the events in it take place during this mystic Festival, and originate from it. Also it should be borne in mind that all the characters represented in the play are personifications of the principles and forces of the individual man, the Kadmos of the myth, who had, by mistaking the psychic for the spiritual, failed to grasp the higher wisdom, and had lapsed from righteousness, enthroning self-righteousness in its stead. Yet when once a man has really entered upon the path that leads to emancipation he can never return for long to the common way followed by the herd of mankind. In the inner depths of the man's consciousness, symbolized by the distant lands in the mystic East, his true Self still continues the work of founding its Mysteries, and sooner or later it will irresistibly compel him to resume the arduous perfective labor whereby he may become initiated in those spiritual

Mysteries. And the divine compelling Power, with its accompanying spiritual energies, brings into action, as it were inductively, the psychic forces of the man, from which strange delusions may result. For the psychic nature of man is prone to pervert and reverse whatever it receives from above; and the psychic world is a realm of illusions. In this myth it figures as Kithairon, the Enchanted Mountain.

The thyrsus, a reed or staff wrapped with vines and tipped with a pine-cone, is emblematic of the pineal gland, the "third eye," the spinal cord, and the mystic "ray" of celestial light which gives seership. But of course this explanation holds no meaning for one whose "eye" is atrophied, and whose "light" is therefore darkness.

*Choral Introduction.* The Eastern Maidens enter in the dawnlight, and having announced that they have come to engage in their untiring work in the service of Dionysos (and this strikes the key-note of the whole drama), they go into session as a Lodge of the Mysteries, from which the "profane" and the belated are excluded. The Dawn-Maidens begin their ritual with a hymn in praise of Dionysos and his Mysteries. They then exhort Thebes to celebrate the sacred Festival, and describe the Cave of Initiation, the nativity-cavern of Zeus, concluding with a representation (in the imagery of the Mystery cosmos-dance) of the sacred trance, or spiritual ecstasy, of the initiate. The opening hymn, exquisitely beautiful, is a perfect mosaic of words and phrases pertaining to the Dionysiac religion; and as these have no equivalents in English (which really has no sacred vocabulary, and is

therefore a very shallow vehicle for conveying the deep truths of the inner life), this wonderful lyric is almost untranslatable. Its meaning can be preserved only in a free, interpretative rendering.

In the ode, the infant Dionysos is called the Bull-horned God, and Zeus is said to have crowned him with a wreath of serpents. A bull is a leader of a herd, and the serpent is an emblem of wisdom; so no further comment is necessary. The music of the flutes and the timbrels, sacred to Dionysos and Rhea, signifies the æthereal sounds heard at a certain stage of the trance.

In the epode, the after-song, of this lyric, the votary of Dionysos is said to "long for the blood of the sacrificed goat, the grace of its raw-eaten flesh." This Dionysiac sacrament, which most certainly was never partaken of literally by the initiates in the Dionysiac Mysteries, became with the rabble an actual religious rite, and of course seems disgustingly heathenish to the believers in a later religion who assert that they are saved by the blood of the sacrificed Lamb. Now, when it is stated, further on in the drama, that Dionysos, the Lord of the Vine, "though a God, is himself the libation poured out to the Gods, that through him mankind may obtain good gifts," we are naturally reminded of one who said, "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman," and who said of the bread he gave to his disciples, "This is my body," and of the wine he gave them to drink, "This is my blood." In all fairness it must be conceded that in the ancient faith, as well as in the modern faith derived therefrom, this sacrament was "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." Moreover,

the observant reader can not but notice in this drama a number of passages for which Euripides would have been open to a charge of plagiarism from the *Gospels* and *Acts* if he had written the tragedy after those books had been penned, instead of about half a millennium before that time. In translating I have therefore found it appropriate, quite naturally, to use biblical phraseology in such passages.

*Act I.* Kadmos and the blind prophet Teiresias, the only men in Thebes who are not evilly disposed toward Dionysos, go forth to celebrate the Festival. They meet Pentheus, who is in a mad rage and is rehearsing to himself recent events. In his soliloquy he states the facts, interlarding them with his own vile charges and insinuations. All the women, becoming adorers of the new God, Dionysos, have fled to the mountain and are engaged in his rites. Pentheus has had many of them thrown in prison, and he purposes to apprehend the others and suppress what he regards as an evil religion, and to put to death the stranger (Dionysos, who has come like unto a son of man), who asserts that Dionysos is a God. At this point in his tirade Pentheus perceives Kadmos and Teiresias, and upbraids them for wearing the fawn-skin and carrying the thyrsus. Teiresias, in defence of the "new God," gives a semi-esoteric exposition of the myth of Demeter and Dionysos. This discourse is somewhat incongruous to the realism of the tragedy, in which Dionysos figures as one of the characters; moreover, Teiresias himself, who plays a part in many Greek myths and legends, is, like Dionysos, a mystical personification. Here Teiresias, the blind prophet, represents the intuitive



faculty influencing the mind to acknowledge the divine Self. Apparently Euripides thought it advisable at this point to furnish a clue to the interior meaning of the myth. His exposition, expanded and made clearer, is as follows:

Demeter, "Mother Earth," is identical with Gaia, the Goddess of many names. Semele, it may be added, also means "Earth"; and Dionysos was sometimes called the son of Demeter. For Gaia, Demeter and Semele are alike aspects of the primordial Earth, Æther, the Divine Substance which is the origin of all Nature, visible and invisible. Dionysos, cosmically considered, is the Divine Spirit pervading Nature. The mortal elements in man are derived from Demeter; his immortal Self is one with Dionysos. The sacramental wine being understood to be the energizer of spiritual inspiration, as in seership, it is said that Dionysos is himself the libation. Psychic frenzy also is in a measure attributed to the influx of spiritual energy. Unskilfully interpolated in this discourse of Teiresias is a passage giving a puerile interpretation of the birth of Dionysos from the thigh of Zeus; this pseudo-explanation is based upon the similarity of the words *meros*, "piece," *ho mēros*, "the thigh," and *homēros*, "hostage." Zeus made a "piece" of æther into an image of Dionysos, and gave it as a "hostage" to Hera, and in after ages men confused the words and said that Dionysos was nursed in the "thigh" of Zeus. The inventor of this nonsensical explanation overlooked the fact that Teiresias was speaking to the first cousin and grandfather of Dionysos, and not to men who lived long after his birth and speculated upon the meaning of

the "thigh" of Zeus. The passage is unquestionably spurious, and is rejected by competent critics.

And now, to avoid telling the whole narrative, thereby forestalling in this introduction the tragedy as dramatized by Euripides, these comments from now on will be restricted to the psychologic meaning of the myth, presenting Kadmos, not in his mythical character, but as that which he represents—a student of the arcane philosophy who has undertaken the perfective work, and in whom therefore a mighty struggle is taking place between the higher and the lower principles of his nature.

Having reached the psychic planes of consciousness, which are above and beyond the physical world perceived through the outer senses, Kadmos violates a spiritual law by esteeming himself superior to the "common herd" from which he has risen. Pride and self-righteousness spring up, dominating him and staying his progress. Rapidly his character deteriorates: he has failed to grasp the spiritual wisdom he was seeking, and the partial knowledge he has gained through the study of philosophy and by reaching out into the psychic realm, he rehearses, without acquiring anything new, until he has only mere formulas, which he looks upon as final truths, so that he becomes narrow-minded and intolerant of the beliefs of others, and finally opposes even the sacred Mysteries which he had set out to learn. Thus his egoism and self-righteousness disqualify him as a candidate for those Mysteries, and cause him to become the enemy of his Divine Self. But that Self again imperatively commands that he resume the perfective work: the God returns to the city to establish his Mysteries. The intuition of Kad-

mos inclines his reason to obey the mandate of the Self; but he has no certainty, and is wavering in his belief. So in the drama Intuition and Reason are personified as two feeble old men supporting each other lest both fall, while personified Self-righteousness opposes and upbraids them both.

*First Choral Interlude.* Heavenly Justice, "Holiness," the One Law which governs the Universe, is invoked against the sublimated egoism that is inimical to the Divine Self. Spiritual exaltation springs not from gloomy austerity, but from glad adoration. Wisdom is not to be obtained by mere intellectual effort, but comes to him who leads the spiritual life, pure, serene and consecrated. Reference is made to centres of the Mysteries in Cyprus, Egypt and Macedonia; and the Mysteries are said to make for eternal peace and bliss, whereas exoteric faiths tend toward gloomy views of life, unfounded theories and superstitions.

*Act II.* Wisdom irradiates from, and is an essential attribute of the true Self, even as light proceeds from the sun. Only by aspiring to become one with that divine Self may man assimilate wisdom. But when the mind is centred in the personal self it is restricted to mere intellectualism, and looks for knowledge outwardly, instead of seeking wisdom inwardly. It can not grasp even the lesser mysteries, save in the dead letter. Thus the man who has failed to develop his higher psychic and spiritual faculties comes to deny his own divine nature, even while priding himself on his learning, piety and assumed righteousness. Scouting all truths that transcend his formulated beliefs and theories, he disclaims his own Godhood,

and fatuously attempts to imprison it, so to say, in human semblance.

*Second Choral Interlude.* The Maidens from the Orient address Dirke as the regent of the sacred fountain of that name in which the infant Dionysos was baptized, and complain that they are thrust away from her presence. Mythologically, all rivers were said to be sons of Okeanos, the Ocean; and the river Acheloös was the father of all the streams in Greece. Here Dirke is called the daughter of Acheloös. Of course rivers do not flow out of the ocean, nor are lesser streams derived from a greater one; but the symbolism of the myth-makers is here very easy to solve. From the great ocean of life, mankind as a whole, come the various races; the Greek race is represented by Acheloös, and its tribal divisions by the other streams. Dirke, the daughter of Acheloös, is the spiritual centre of that race; and the two streams, the Ismenos and the Dirke, the latter flowing from the sacred fountain, represent the Lesser and the Greater Mysteries. Dirke was claimed to be the tutelary Deity of Thebes, and the Dawn-Maidens complain that she has excluded them from her city; their Lord has been cast into prison, and they too are threatened with bondage. But they are as yet unaware that their Lord (the Spiritual Mind) is one with the Divine Self, and so they call upon their God to come from heavenly heights or distant realms to save them, bearing his "golden bough," the sacred thyrsus.

*Act III. Scene I.* The holy Power invoked by the man when he first consecrated himself to the winning of wisdom again manifests itself. The intellectual structure

which he in his egoism had upreared, and in which he had thought to imprison the True, is demolished. So sublimely has Euripides described this scene, and so clear is his imagery, that it is needless, and would savor of sacrilege, to reduce that imagery to a more literal expression.

*Scene II.* Though the divine energy in the man has again become kinetic, his mind is yet cramped by self-righteousness, his soul warped by bigotry, so that no spiritual illumination results. For, though a man has acquired all the other virtues, they are nullified if he prides himself upon their possession, deeming himself superior to his fellows, even as one who says, "I am holier than thou." And in no case does the illumination follow immediately upon the energizing of the forces that awaken the inner senses and faculties. Between the material world and the spiritual lies the psychic world, and only by passing through the psychic may the spiritual world be reached. Therefore the first real knowledge of the occult is that which relates to things psychic, and these are many and marvelous. This is said here of the experiences of any one who is climbing the steep and difficult mystic path, and does not apply to the psychic garbage collected by materialistic researchers who "scientifically" experiment with sickly and usually fraudulent "mediums," and investigate houses haunted by the unclean shades of the dead. In the drama the crazed pseudo-votaries of Dionysos perform strange feats of magic; but they are all suffering from delirium, and some of them are said to suckle wolf-cubs—which metaphorically describes the doings of misguided psychics and

mediums who with their own life-force animate grewsome entities of the underworld of the dead.

*Scene III.* The initial failure of Kadmos was caused by his mistaking the psychic for the spiritual. Now, again essaying the perfective task, he in his self-righteousness, and consequent unwillingness to receive further knowledge, looks upon all psychic manifestations as evil. He is minded to suppress them perforce; but the same mystic Power that aroused his psychic nature now casts a glamour over him, and he becomes eager to know more about them.

*Third Choral Interlude.* The seeker for wisdom should break away from all fixed opinions and creeds, and rejoice in perfect freedom of thought. His mind is likened to a fawn that is joyous after having avoided the nets and outsped the hounds of the hunters. But he should be magnanimous, and be tolerant toward those who would compel him to accept their narrow religious views and unfounded theories. He should be like a warrior who, having rendered his foe defenceless, refrains from striking a final blow. In the slow course of evolution, ignorance, false faiths and unfaiths, will vanish; for Divine Wisdom is the compelling and guiding force of evolution. And he who seeks to gain that wisdom, and thereby enter into the eternal peace of the spiritual life, must be diligent in the perfective work; for, of those who strive for it, many are they who fail.

*Act IV.* The psychic world is now perceived by the man, and he succumbs to the glamour of this second world, the realm of Delusion. Humorously, in the tragedy, he sees two suns and a twofold city, and is

filled with a sense of unlimited power. But he is not now seeking the spiritual Mysteries; he is going forth to spy upon the psychic Mysteries. Even in this venture he is guided by his Divine Self; for there is in it a lesson of life that he must learn. Now, however, his deluded mind holds a strangely distorted conception of that Self.

*Fourth Choral Interlude.* He who out of mere curiosity, or having no loftier motive than to satisfy the craving for knowledge and power to be selfishly employed, seeks to explore the psychic realm of consciousness will either fail at the outset, merely beclouding his mind with "occult" puerilities, akin to imbecility, or he will become an obtruder in a world of unbalanced forces, whereby he will be subjected to dangerous delusions, akin to madness and often leading thereto. This course, thus followed in the pursuit of knowledge, apart from wisdom, is the very reverse of that which leads to the comprehension of the mysteries of life. Purity, unselfishness, serenity of soul, breadth of mind, and deep reverence for the divine Powers in Nature that are ever making for holiness and perfection, must be acquired by him who would pass through the portals of the Mysteries.

*Act V. Scene I.* By rashly venturing to spy upon psychic mysteries, forcing himself into the realm of delusions, the man becomes the prey of his own distraught psychic nature. His inner Self has led him on, and seemingly betrays him to the frenzied forces of his elemental self; for it is only by the most terrible experiences that the man can be purged from the pollution of his self-righteousness. His vicious egoism is thus destroyed by the very elements from which it was developed.

*Scene II.* As one who wakens from a hideous dream, the man slowly recovers from the irrational subjective state brought about by his exploration of the psychic apart from the spiritual. His self-righteousness has indeed met a violent death; but he does not as yet realize that it was a heinous vice, and not the transcendent virtue he had prided himself upon; so he grieves at having lost it. His egoism has been crushed to earth, and he feels that he is defenceless without that self-assertiveness.

*Scene III.* Upon the man, now humbled by the consciousness of his errors, his true Self passes judgment. Having dissociated himself from the common run of mankind by undertaking the perfective work, Kadmos can never return to the slow course of evolution which they follow. Even though he has failed through refusing to take wisdom when it lay within his grasp, he must go on, striving ever for that wisdom, through a succession of earth-lives, until he wins his way to conscious immortality, that oneness with the inner God which was the goal of the true follower of Dionysos. Even between his earth-lives the man will not have the periods of rest which constitute the heaven of the profane. Bitterly Kadmos complains that he is not to cross the river Acheron, to find rest on its further side.

In this concluding scene Euripides employs effectively the *deus ex machina*: Dionysos, golden-crowned, appears on a white cloud and gives judgment. In the literal reading of the drama there is here an element of inconsistency, even of injustice, since the hapless Kadmos and his wife, Harmonia, have visited upon them the sins of their off-



spring. But this inconsistency is due to the fact, already explained, that Kadmos, who personifies the dawn of abstract thought, the mystic light from the East, also stands for the individual in whom that light has dawned, and as such he includes all the other personifications in the drama, and therefore has to atone for their sins. Unfortunately, in the manuscript from which all extant copies of the tragedy are derived several pages have been torn out, presumably by some fanatic who resented the entrance of the Son of Zeus in this scene like unto a son of man, sitting on a white cloud and having on his head a golden crown, even as he appears in a later apocalyptic drama. Fragments of this lost portion are found in the *Christos Paschōn*, which is, says Tyrrell, "a wretchedly stupid drama, falsely attributed to Gregory Nazianzenus, giving an account of the circumstances connected with the Passion of Christ." It is a *cento*, a patchwork of stolen verses, chiefly cribbed out of this and two other plays of Euripides.

The beginning of the speech of Dionysos is lost through the mutilation of the manuscript; but where the intact portion following the gap begins he is addressing Kadmos, prophesying to him, in symbolic language, his final emancipation from earth-life and exaltation to blissful immortality. Speaking as the oracle of Zeus, Dionysos foretells that Kadmos will be changed into a dragon, and his wife, Harmonia, will become a serpent. Now, a serpent is composed mostly of vertebræ: limbless, almost brainless, he is little more than an animated spinal column. A dragon is (mythologically) a serpent depicted with a

capacious head (implying a brain), and sometimes with wings. The word "dragon" means literally "one who sees." So the prediction is that Kadmos, by developing the occult functions of the brain, will become a Seer. But why will Harmonia be changed to a serpent? Kadmos is the regent of the cerebro-spinal system, which pertains to intellect, and Harmonia is the regent of the sympathetic nervous system, correspondent to the psycho-emotional and impulsive nature. When the ganglia of the sympathetic system are harmonized, they will eventually grow together and evolve into a second spinal cord. This fact, unknown to modern physiologists, but very well known to the ancient myth-makers, accounts for the name "Harmony" given to the wife of Kadmos, and explains why she is to become a serpent. According to the prediction, Kadmos and Harmonia are to journey in an ox-wagon, and in command of a barbarian host are to sack many cities, finally pillaging the oracle of Apollon, whereupon they shall begin their toilsome homeward journey, and at length, by the saving grace of Ares, shall regain their place among the Immortal Gods. Thus it is stated in the terminology of the myth-makers that Kadmos, having failed in the perfective work, must resume that work, which can only be performed while in the physical body (of which the wagon is a symbol), and pass through a series of incarnations. In his quest for wisdom he will study many systems of philosophy and religion (the "cities" of the myth); but not until he awakens his inner senses (plunders the shrine of Apollon) will he discover the straitened way that leads to conscious

immortality; and when he has found that path, and has entered thereupon, it is only by unremitting toil and struggle that he can reach the land of the Blessed Immortals.

The development of the cords of the sympathetic nervous system into a second spinal cord will come about only in the far-distant future, in the slow evolutionary course along which mankind are proceeding. But the individual who undertakes the perfective work can, by gaining control of the psychic forces, the occult "fires," link the ganglia by currents of those forces and thereby bring into activity the illuminative brain-centres, that otherwise would remain latent until the physical body had developed into a more effective instrument for the indwelling mind and soul.

In the drama Kadmos is represented as being ignorant of the true import of the statements made by Dionysos: with a touch of comedy, Kadmos repeats them incorrectly, saying that Harmonia, like himself, will become a dragon; and he accepts it all literally. Overwhelmed by his sorrow, he dwells upon the long and woful exile that awaits him, but loses sight of the glorious consummation prophesied by the God.

Very probably the concluding portion of the drama, here given only in prophecy, had been treated in one of the many dramas that are now lost. The story of Pentheus was told by Aischylos in a tragedy entitled *Pentheus*. Aischylos also wrote the *Semelē*, which had for its subject the first birth of Dionysos and the death of Semele. Another of his dramas, the *Xantriai*, "Wool-carders," is supposed to have dealt with the myth of

Kadmos and Pentheus. Xenokles wrote a play entitled *Bakchai*; and Iophon, the son of Sophokles, wrote one under the title *Bakchai ē Pentheus*. All these dramas shared the fate of Aischylos' *Prometheus Luomenos*, "Prometheus Unbound," which told the story of the second crucifixion of the Fire-giver and his freeing by Herakles: the dramas are lost, along with most of the plays written by the great Greek tragic poets. Now, it is fairly certain that these dramas were intentionally "lost" on account of the many points of resemblance between them and the scriptures of a later religion. Of all the dramas pertaining to the Dionysiac religion the only important ones that escaped destruction are the *Prometheus Bound* of Aischylos and the *Bakchai* of Euripides.

PART II

THE ADORERS OF DIONYSOS

The *Bakchai* of Euripides Translated into English Verse



# THE ADORERS OF DIONYSOS

(*Bakchai*)

Translated from the Greek of

EURIPIDES

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED:

DIONYSOS (*"Judge of Men"*), *"the God of Many Names,"* among them being IAKCHOS, BAKCHOS, or BAKCHEUS (*"Shouter"*), and BROMIOS (*"Roarer"*); son of Zeus and Semele.

KADMOS (*"Light from the East"*), founder of Thebes and former king thereof; son of Agenor (*"Manly"*) and Telephassa (*"Far-shining"*).

TEIRESIAS, a prophet, old and blind.

PENTHEUS (*"Mourner"*), king of Thebes; son of Echion and Agave, and grandson of Kadmos.

AGAVE (*"Illustrious"*), daughter of Kadmos and mother of Pentheus.

CAPTAIN of Pentheus' Guard.

HERDSMAN.

MESSENGER, servant of Pentheus.

CHORUS OF ORIENTAL MAIDENS, the adorers of Dionysos. (*The tragic chorus, originally consisting of twelve singers, was increased to fifteen, and in this drama it probably comprised the latter number, who sang with the instrumental accompaniment of flute, timbrel and drum.*)

GUARDS *and* ATTENDANTS.

SCENE, *before the royal palace of Thebes.*

PROLOGUE

**The Prophet-God is not without Honor, save in His  
Own Country, and among His Own Kin**

[*Enter* DIONYSOS.]

DIONYSOS

I, Dionysos, to the land of Thebes  
Am come, of Zeus the son, whom Semele,  
Daughter of Kadmos, bore when she was brought  
To travail by the lightning-laden fire.  
From mine essential Godhood I have changed  
To semblance of a mortal, and I stand  
Beside the spring of Dirke and the stream  
Ismenos. I behold, here near her home,  
My thunder-blasted mother's burial-mound;  
The ruins of the house are smouldering  
With the yet living flame of Zeus's fire—  
The deathless outrage Hera perpetrated  
Upon my mother. Highly I approve  
Of Kadmos, who hath kept this ground untrod,  
His daughter's consecrated sepulchre.  
'Twas I myself who round about it drew  
A veil, the clustering verdure of the vine.

Departing from the golden harvest-fields  
Of Lydia and of Phrygia, far I journeyed  
O'er Persia's sun-irradiated plains,  
By Bactrian strongholds, the forbidding land  
Of Media, blest Arabia, onward through



All Asia, lying by the briny sea  
And having stately-towered cities, peopled  
With Hellenes intermixed with foreigners,  
And first I came to this Hellenic city,  
Having in distant countries organized  
My choral bands and sacred Mysteries,  
That I, a God, may visibly appear  
To mortals. And of all the land of Hellas  
Thebes first I stirred to clamorous invocation,  
Arrayed her in the fawn-skin robe, and placed  
The ivied spear, the thyrsus, in her hand,  
Because my mother's sisters, most unseemly,  
Declared that Dionysos was not sprung  
From Zeus; but Semele, they said, when she  
Became a mortal's bride, averred 'twas Zeus  
Who had encroached on her virginity—  
A subterfuge of Kadmos. They affirmed,  
With tongues envenomed, that because of this  
Zeus put to death the wanton who had falsely  
Named him her paramour. And so I drove  
The sisters raving from their homes, and they,  
Bereft of reason, dwell amid the hills,  
Constrained to wear the garb that doth befit  
My Mysteries; and all the female Thebans  
Of years mature I drove with maddened minds  
Forth from their homes; and, mingled with the daughters  
Of Kadmos, on the roofless rocks they sit,  
Beneath the fragrant pine-trees. For this city  
Must learn, e'en though she care not, that she is  
A scandal-monger, uninitiated  
In my most holy Mysteries, must learn

That in my mother Semele's behalf  
I speak, appearing visibly to mortals,  
The God whom blamelessly she bore to Zeus.

So Kadmos, then, hath given his royal rank  
And sovereignty to Pentheus, whom his daughter  
Agave bore, and who doth war against  
My true divinity, and from libations  
Doth thrust me, and doth nowhere in his prayers  
Remember me. Because of these affronts  
I shall to him and to all Thebans prove  
That I am verily a God. And having  
Well ordered all things here, I shall depart  
Unto another land to manifest  
Myself divinely. But if Thebes in wrath  
May take up arms to drive the worshippers  
Of Bakcheus from the hills, then shall I lead  
My prophet-maidens, and conclude the conflict.  
Therefor I have assumed this mortal form,  
And wear the semblance of the son of man.

Come, Asian maidens, my devoted band,  
Who left the rocky wall of Lydia, Tmolos,  
And whom from distant alien homes I brought  
As my companions, fellow-travellers,  
Upraise the timbrels, which to Phrygian towns  
Peculiarly belong, the instruments  
By Mother Rhea and myself contrived,  
And sound them loudly as ye march around  
The royal halls of Pentheus, that the town  
Of Kadmos may behold. I now shall go  
To Mount Kithairon's rocky glens, where wait  
My worshippers, and in their dances join.

[Exit.



Come, Asian maidens, my devoted band.



## CHORAL PRELUDE

The Prophet-Maidens Begin with a Mystery-Session  
the Festival in Honor of Their Fire-Born Lord

[After loudly clashing their timbrels behind the scenes,  
the ORIENTAL MAIDENS enter quietly and  
circumspectly.]

## CHORUS

From a distant land, my home Asiatic, *Strophe I.*

I hastened o'er Tmolos, the flower-crowned,  
To take upon me, with joy ecstatic,

The mystical yoke of the Lord of Sound,  
Whose praises I sing as my timbrel I smite;  
For his yoke is easy, his burden is light.

On the path who is coming, is tardily nearing? *Ant. I.*

Who knocks at the door? Foolish virgin, depart!  
In hallowed silence let all within hearing  
Give ear to the worship that wells from the heart,  
For now I shall hymn the inspiring strains  
That Dionysos, our Lord, ordains.

O blest is he who hath divined *Strophe II.*

The secret ritual of the Gods,  
The mystery of the ivy-twined,  
Vine-wreathed and pine-cone pointed rods.  
For when the radiant Self within  
Hath made him to the Gods akin  
He doth their hallowed wisdom win.

He hastens, at his soul's command,  
To bathe in purifying fountains;  
Initiate in a Bakchic band,  
In solitudes among the mountains

Where foot profane hath never trod,  
 To him are rightfully revealed  
 The Mysteries of the Prophet-God:  
 His magic powers he learns to wield,  
 Awakens them, one after other,  
 Till all the treasures are unsealed  
 Of Kybele, the mighty Mother.  
 With ivy crowned, he upward swings  
 His thyrsus, and his service brings  
 To Dionysos, King of kings.  
 Oh, haste, ye maidens, faster, faster!  
 Ye who with Dionysos run,  
 Of many magic sounds the Master,  
 Himself a God, a God's own Son.  
 Afar no longer doth he bide  
 In Phrygian mountains; he hath hied  
 To Hellas' highways, smooth and wide.

The God is he, the doubly born, *Antistrophe II.*  
 Whose mother, bringing him to earth  
 Before her time, was racked and torn  
 By the resistless pangs of birth,  
 The babe she labored to produce  
 From her protecting womb torn loose  
 By wingèd thunderbolts from Zeus.  
 And she was of her life bereaved  
 By lightning's lash and blazing power,  
 But straightway Kronian Zeus received  
 The babe, and in a strange birth-bower  
 Ensconsed him: for the Father cleft  
 His thigh, and made a cave-like cup

To hold his Son; his fingers deft  
 With golden clasps then closed it up,  
 And there, from Hera safely hidden,  
 It lay. But when life's milk to sup  
 The infant by the Fates was bidden,  
 Then Zeus from his concealment drew  
 A God upon whose forehead grew  
 A bull's curved horns, of golden hue.  
 And then a wreath of serpents curling  
 Zeus wove and gave him for a crown;  
 And hence the prophet-maidens, twirling  
 The ivied thyrsus up and down,  
 When to the woodland they repair  
 Lure bright-eyed serpents from their lair,  
 And twine them, wreath-like, in their hair.

Thebes, city of Semele's nurturing, *Strophe III.*  
 Be the ivy crown thy queenly due;  
 O'erflow in the joyfulness of Spring  
 With the golden blooms of the sacred yew.  
 Essay thy skill as a prophetess,  
 Divining with twigs of pine or oak,  
 Attired in thy dappled fawn-skin dress,  
 With white woollen tassels befringing thy cloak.  
 But be ye holy and free from sin  
 When swinging the thyrses forcefully round.  
 Oh, all the land shall be joining in  
 Our sacred dance when the Lord of Sound  
 Shall lead his band of adorers away  
 To the hills, where the rabble of women, who left

The loom and the shuttle, in idleness stay,  
By Dionysos of reason bereft.

O weird habitation, prepared for the use *Ant. III.*  
Of the Curetes, worshipping underground,  
Most holy nativity-cavern of Zeus,  
In Crete, where the triple-plumed Corybants found,  
In its cavernous depths, this timbrel of mine,  
With its parchment head that I tighten and tune.  
And they hastened skilfully to combine  
Its rapturous rumblings with the croon  
Of the softly-breathing Phrygian flute.  
And they placed in our Mother Rhea's hand  
The thunderous drum, the attribute  
Of the Lord of Sound; but the frenzied band  
Of Satyrs gained from the Mother of Gods  
The gift, and at our triennial rites  
They joined in the dancing, with thyrsus-rods,  
Wherein Dionysos himself delights.

In the hills 'tis a joy in a circle to dance *Epode.*  
Till the votary reels from the ring aside,  
And falls to the ground in a mystic trance,  
By the fawn-skin protected and sanctified,  
Athirst for the sacramental grace  
Of the goat's fresh blood, an offering  
At the feast of the followers of the chase,  
When the Lord of Sound, the Hunter-King,  
Doth swiftly the lofty mountains scale  
Of Phrygia and Lydia. Hail! All-hail!



[*The entranced Votary beholdeth the Beatific Vision.*]

Flowing with milk is the ground,  
Flowing with flavorful wine,  
Flowing with nectar bee-found,  
Fragrance diffused by the trine  
Floating like incense around.  
Bakcheus, with flambeau of pine,  
Waving a streamer of flame,  
Summons with gladness divine  
All who rejoice in his name.  
Loose to the breeze are his tresses,  
Streaming and waving about;  
Loudly his band he addresses,  
Drowning their song with his shout:

“O come, prophet-maidens, ye who are  
Begemmed by Paktolos, the river gold-flowing,  
Adore Dionysos, your guiding star,  
Upon him your praises devoutly bestowing.  
With the rolling tones of your timbrels invoke  
The Prophet-God who is Lord of Sound;  
And raise ye the cries of the Phrygian folk,  
The magical measures their sages found,  
When the flute is heard in the hallowed rites,  
And its mellow tone sustains the song  
Of the maidens who dance on the mountain heights,  
A joyful, divinely frenzied throng.”

Up springs the votary then, and dances  
With tireless feet and dizzying speed,  
Like a playful filly that leaps and prances  
Around its dam in the pasture-mead.

## FIRST ACT

The Self-righteous King Persecuteth All Them Who  
Celebrate the Festival

[*Enter TEIRESIAS.*]

TEIRESIAS

Gate-keeper, ho, there! Summon from his home  
Kadmos, Agenor's son, who hither came  
From Sidon City and with towers fenced round  
This town of Thebes. Let some one take my message,  
Informing him that 'tis Teiresias  
Who seeketh him. He knoweth that I come  
By an appointment made between us two  
Old fellows, to entwine with clustered vines  
Our thyrsus-wands, to don our fawn-skin robes,  
And crown our heads with garlands ivy-twined.

[*Enter KADMOS.*]

KADMOS

Dear friend, I heard, when in my house, thy voice,  
And I perceived the wisdom of the course  
That thou wouldst wisely follow: I am come  
Prepared, thus wearing the habiliments  
Distinctive of the God. For we with all  
The power within us ought to honor him,  
My daughter's child, indeed, our Dionysos,  
Who hath shown forth to mortals as a God.  
Where ought we, then, to dance, where quiet stand  
And rhythmically toss the hoary head?  
Teach me, Teiresias, age instructing age,  
Since thou art skilful, that I may not tire,  
By night or day, while bravely beating time

Upon the ground with my cone-pointed staff.  
Gladly let us forget that we are old.

TEIRESIAS

Thy sentiment is mine; I too am young  
And sprightly. I'll essay the arduous dance.

KADMOS

Then go we in a chariot to the mountain?

TEIRESIAS

Nay; for 'twould show the God less warmth of worship.

KADMOS

Old though I am, I'll guide thee, aged friend.

TEIRESIAS

On easy paths the God will lead us thither.

KADMOS

Of all the men who dwell in Thebes are we  
The only ones who are to dance for Bakcheus?

TEIRESIAS

Aye; we alone regard him reverently;  
The rest are evilly disposed toward him.

KADMOS

We are delaying. Come, grasp thou mine hand.

TEIRESIAS

There! Take thou mine, and hand in hand we go.

KADMOS

I shall not dwarf my concept of the Gods  
To suit the frailties of my mortal nature.

## TEIRESIAS

'Tis not for us to theorize concerning  
 The prime Divinities. We hold traditions  
 Of our forefathers, that are old as time;  
 No reasoning shall overthrow them, even  
 Though formulated by the subtlest mind.  
 It may be, one will say that I disgrace  
 Mine hoary age by garlanding mine head  
 With ivy, and thus going forth to dance.  
 Surely the God hath no distinction made  
 Whether the young or very old must dance.  
 Nay; but impartially he doth desire  
 Honors from all alike, nor doth he care  
 To be exalted only by the youthful.

## KADMOS

Since thou, Teiresias, seest not this earth-light,  
 I'll act for thee as an interpreter  
 Of oracles. Here hasteth to the house  
 Pentheus, Echion's son, to whom I gave  
 My kingship of the land. How mad his mood!  
 What new disaster hath he now to tell?

[*Enter PENTHEUS, distracted and talking to himself.*]

## PENTHEUS

It chanced that I was journeying beyond  
 The borders of our country, and I heard  
 Reports of strange misdoings in our city:  
 That from their homes our women folk have fled,  
 Shamming God-inspiration, and are roaming  
 Among the wooded hills, with dance and song

Adoring and invoking this new God,  
This Dionysos, whosoe'er he be.  
Amid each company of worshippers  
There stands a sacramental mixing-bowl,  
Brimming with wine; and to secluded nooks  
The votaries go slinking, here and there,  
To join with men in dalliance. They pretend  
That they indeed are Bakchic priestesses;  
Yet they prefer the rites of Aphrodite  
To those of Bakcheus. Many of these jades  
I therefore apprehended, and my servants  
Now keep them safely in the common prison,  
Their hands well manacled. And all the rest,  
Who roam abroad, I from the hills shall hunt:  
I speak of Ino, and Agave, who  
Unto Echion bore me, and Aktaion's  
Mother, Autonoë. With nets of iron  
I shall secure them, and shall quickly stop  
This wicked Bakchic worship. It is said  
A certain stranger hath from Lydia come  
Unto our land, a master of enchantments  
And incantations, with gold-yellow hair  
In curls perfumed, cheeks tinted as with wine,  
And eyes that shimmer with the witching graces  
Of Aphrodite. Day and night he doth  
With maidens hold communion, making proffer  
Of sacred Mysteries. If I lay hold  
Of him within these walls, I'll quickly stop  
His thyrsus-clashing and his ringlet-tossing:  
His head I'll sever from his neck. 'Tis he

Who saith that Dionysos is a God.\*  
 Now, whosoe'er this stranger is who thus  
 Blasphemeth, doth he not for his offences  
 Deserve the dreaded halter of the hangman?  
 Aha! Another marvel! I behold  
 Teiresias the seer, in dappled fawn-skins  
 Arrayed, and likewise, moving me to laughter,  
 My mother's father flourishing the wand  
 Of Bakcheus! Father, pained am I to see  
 Thine hoary head abandoned by thy wits.  
 Come, throw away the ivy crown, and Oh,  
 My mother's father, from thy noble hand  
 Let fall the thyrsus! Thou, Teiresias,  
 Didst win him over to this faith. Thou wouldst,  
 Moreover, introduce among mankind  
 The cult of this new God, that thou might'st watch  
 The augurous birds and win thy priestly wage  
 Interpreting the tokens of the fire  
 At sacrifices. Wert thou not exempt  
 By reason of thine hoary-headed age,  
 In chains thou shouldst be sitting now among  
 The worshippers of Bakcheus, for thy crime  
 Of introducing wicked Mystery-rites;

\*Here follow, in the Greek text, three lines that are obviously spurious, as they are unskillfully wedged in and are so poorly worded that they can only be construed to mean that Dionysos, as well as Semele, perished in the flames. They read:

[ 'Tis he who saith that in the thigh of Zeus  
 He was sewn up, one time, and with his mother  
 Was by the gleaming thunderbolt consumed,  
 Because she lied concerning Zeus's *amours*. ]



Moving me to laughter,  
My mother's father!





For when the grape's refreshment comes to women  
 In a religious festival, there's naught  
 Of wholesomeness, say I, in their devotions.

## CHORUS

What blasphemy! O stranger, dost thou not  
 Revere the Gods and Kadmos, sower of  
 The earth-sprung harvest of heroic warriors?  
 Son of Echion, shamest thou thy tribe?

## TEIRESIAS

Whene'er a wise man findeth good occasion  
 For speech, with scarce an effort he can be  
 Right eloquent; but thou dost keep thy tongue  
 Running on wheels, yet in these words of thine  
 There's naught but nonsense. The audacious man,  
 Holding authority, and ready-tongued,  
 But not ensouled by the superior mind,  
 Is verily a menace to the State.

Now, as to this new God, whom thou dost flout,  
 I am not able to declare the greatness  
 That shall be his in Hellas. There are two  
 Prime-elements, young Prince, in all this world  
 And in the human frame: Goddess Demeter  
 Is first, and she is Earth—call her which name  
 Thou wilt;—on solid nutriment she doth  
 Rear mortals; but her complement, then coming,  
 The Son of Semele, devised the draught  
 Pressed from the fruitage of the vine, and gave  
 To mortal men this sacrament, and doth  
 Allay the grief of these most wretched creatures  
 Whene'er the vine's life-blood exalteth them.  
 And sleep he giveth, blest oblivion

Of evils that infest the day: there is  
 No other balm for utter weariness.  
 He, though himself a God, is the libation  
 Poured to the Gods, in order that through him  
 Men may obtain good gifts and benefits.\*

This God is also verily a prophet,  
 In that the Bakchic rapture and fine frenzy  
 Lead to exalted seership: for when'er  
 The God doth mightily infuse the body  
 He causeth his ecstatic votaries  
 To make prediction of futurity.  
 He shareth somewhat in the regency  
 Of Ares: when an army, panoplied,  
 And ranged in serried ranks, is suddenly  
 Stricken with panic ere a spear is touched,

\*Following this line comes a passage which competent critics reject as an interpolation. It is not at all in the style of Euripides, and it interrupts the subject of the discourse. It gives a puerile explanation of the birth of Dionysos from the thigh of Zeus, and evidently the three spurious lines in the preceding speech of Pentheus were inserted as a peg on which to hang this pseudo-interpretation.

[And dost thou ridicule him for the legend  
 That in the thigh of Zeus he was sewn up?  
 I'll show thee, then, the beauty of the myth.  
 When Zeus had snatched him from the lightning-fire,  
 And to Olympos took the baby God,  
 Hera designed to hurl him out of heaven.  
 But Zeus, e'en as the God is wont, devised  
 A counterplot: he tore a fragment from  
 The earth-encircling æther, fashioned it  
 In form like Dionysos, and surrendered  
 This image as a hostage to the spite  
 Of Hera. So in time 'twas said by mortals  
 That he was nurtured in the thigh of Zeus;  
 Confounding names, they framed a myth, because  
 The God was hostage once to Goddess Hera.]

This frenzy also is from Dionysos.  
Thou yet shalt see him e'en on Delphi's crags,  
Leaping above the firs and o'er the twain  
Peaks of the mountain-table, brandishing  
Triumphantly the golden bough of Bakcheus—  
Mighty in Hellas. Hearken unto me,  
King Pentheus. Boast not thou that o'er mankind  
Brute force prevaieth. If thou dost imagine,  
But thine imagination is diseased,  
Do not imagine thou art taking thought.  
Welcome the God to Thebes: pour him libations,  
Join in his festival, and crown thine head.

'Tis not for Dionysos to compel  
The women to be temperate in love,  
For in their nature there is that which doth  
Impel them ever to be temperate  
In all ways. This thou must consider well.  
For truly in the festivals of Bakcheus  
She who is chaste shall not be led astray.

See now, thou dost rejoice when at thy gates  
A multitude assembleth, and the city  
Doth loudly magnify the name of Pentheus.  
And He, methinks, delighteth to receive  
Due honor. Therefore Kadmos, whom thou flourest,  
And I will wear the ivy-plaited crown  
And tread the dance. A hoary-headed pair,  
Yet dance we must! I shall not be persuaded  
By thy discourse to war against the Gods.  
Thou'rt mad, thy mind is grievously tormented,  
And neither in enchantments might'st thou find  
A cure, nor but for these wouldst thou be crazed.

## CHORUS

O aged prophet, thy discourse is worthy  
 Of eloquent Apollo. Thou art wise  
 To glorify our God, the Lord of Sound.

## KADMOS

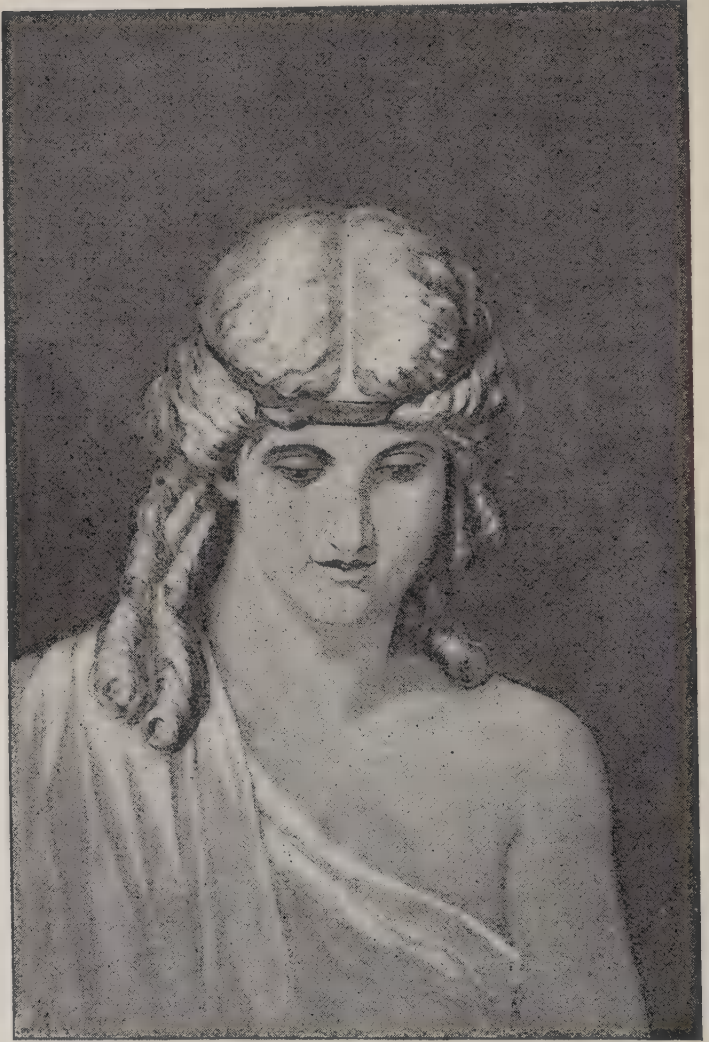
My son, the counsel that Teiresias  
 Hath given thee is sound. Abide with us,  
 And not without the pale of orthodoxy.  
 For now, in truth, thy mind is in a flutter,  
 And when thou thinkest, giddy-brained art thou.  
 For even if this man is not a God—  
 As thou dost say—however, in thy presence  
 Let him be called a God, and do thou nobly  
 Prevaricate, that so it may appear  
 That Semele indeed brought forth a God,  
 Reflecting honor thus on all our race.

Dost thou recall the horrifying fate  
 That overtook Aktaion, whom the hounds,  
 Raw-ravening, that he himself had reared,  
 Tore into shreds in yonder gloomy forest,  
 Because he boasted he was mightier  
 In hunting than the Goddess Artemis?  
 Lest thou a like fate suffer, let me now  
 With ivy crown thine head. Come, side with us,  
 And give the God his due of adoration.

## PENTHEUS

Faugh! Keep thy hand away! Betake thyself  
 To thy religious frolics, but refrain  
 From wiping off thy silliness on me.  
 This prophet, thine instructor in unreason,





That girl-faced stranger, who doth bring strange madness  
Upon our women-folk.

I'll bring to justice. Ho! Detail at once  
Some of my guard to hasten to the seat  
Where this diviner taketh auguries,  
And pry it up with levers, hurling it  
In shattered fragments to the ground, and fling  
His consecrated chaplets to the winds  
And whirling storms. For 'tis by doing this  
I'll sting him to the quick. Let others go  
Throughout the city and like sleugh-hounds track  
That girl-faced stranger, who doth bring strange madness  
Upon our women-folk, and doth corrupt  
Their morals. If ye catch him, hale him hither  
In chains, that he may duly meet with justice  
And suffer death by stoning, seeing thus  
A rueful Bakchic festival in Thebes.

## TEIRESIAS

Ah, thou malignant king, thy words convey  
A deeper meaning than thy mind hath fathomed:  
Prophetic frenzy doth inspire thee now,  
Who wast before but mentally disordered.  
Come, Kadmos, let us go, and offer prayers  
In this deluded man's behalf, although  
He's but a savage brute, and in behalf  
Of our benighted city, that the God  
Bring on them no unlooked-for visitation.  
Tapping thine ivied staff, keep step with me,  
And try to keep my feeble body upright,  
As I do thine. 'Twould be indeed a shame  
For two old men to fall; but that we'll risk,  
Since we must render service unto Bakcheus,  
The Son of Zeus. But, Kadmos, have a care

Lest Pentheus, fitly named for mourning, bring  
 Mourning upon thy house. I gather this  
 From his own acts, and not from prophecy;  
 A fool he is, and speaketh foolishly.

[*Exeunt.*]

### FIRST CHORAL INTERLUDE

**The Prophet-Maidens Invoke Heavenly Justice, and  
 Magnify the Mystery-God**

#### CHORUS

O Law Supernal, who dost hold *Strophe 1.*  
 O'er all the Gods thy queenly sway,  
 And dost with golden wing enfold  
 The earth, where mortals blindly stray,  
 Dost thou attend what Pentheus saith?  
 Dost hear the words this impious one  
 Doth utter with his lawless breath  
 Against the Lord of Sound, the Son  
 Of Semele, the God whose place  
 Is e'er the foremost and the best  
 Among the beauty-crowned who grace  
 The joyous banquets of the Blest?  
 'Tis he who doth with them rejoice  
 Who in his mystic ritual dance,  
 When flutes accompany the voice  
 In magic measures that entrance,  
 And who from care and anxious thought  
 Are free when they at banquets dine  
 To praise the Gods, and there is brought  
 The cordial of the clustered vine,  
 And then the feasters, ivy-crowned,  
 The wine-bowl wraps in sleep profound.



The tongue uncurbed and meddlesome,     \* *Antistrophe I.*  
 And folly setting law at naught,  
 To grief inevitably come.

The quiet life and tranquil thought  
 Remain unmoved, whate'er betide,  
 Preserving thus the spirit's home.  
 For though the Heavenly Ones abide  
 Afar in æther's azure dome,  
 They mark the conduct, foul or fair,  
 Of mortals dwelling here below.  
 Mere knowledge, how profound so'er,  
 Which men to labored study owe,  
 Is never Wisdom; nor may man  
 By mental toil alone e'er gain,  
 Within his life's short-reaching span,  
 The truths eternal and arcane.  
 And whosoe'er devotes his mind  
 To teachings hawked in learning's mart  
 May fail to win the truths enshrined  
 Within the temple of his heart.  
 These ways, methinks, the Gods ordained  
 For men deranged and rattle-brained.

O fain would I fly with the wings of a dove     *Strophe II.*  
 To Cyprus, the isle Aphrodite out-singled,  
 Where her children, the heart-luring Godlings of love,  
 Are dwelling, with mortals celestially mingled,  
 Or away to the torrid, rainless land  
 Where the hundred-mouthed cerulean river,  
 With alluvial riches of silt and sand,  
 Is ever of bounteous crops the giver.

But where is the land, more beautiful still,

The Pierian haunt of the rapturous Muses,  
With its lofty Olympos, the God-peopled hill

That over the earth its glory diffuses?

Oh, thither transport me, thou Lord of Sound,

The God who art guide of the worshippers thronging  
About thee, and hailing thee, ivy-crowned.

For the Graces are there, and heavenly Longing,  
And thy Mystery-rites are established there,  
The rites that only initiates share.

Our God, who is truly the Son of Zeus, *Ant. II.*

To the feasts of his worshippers bringeth enjoyment;  
And the Goddess Peace, with her treasures profuse,

He loves, for to mortals she deals out employment,  
Prosperity, quiet and happiness,

And of youth is the heavenly nourishing-mother.  
To him who has much, and to him who has less,

(For he pities the one as well as the other)

He tenders the wine of his saving grace;

But he loathes the deluded apostle of sadness  
Who looks on the earth as a dismal place

And flouts at the doctrine that only by gladness  
May mortals attain to eternal life.

The man who can reason refuses to follow  
The wiselings maintaining in wordy strife

Their fanciful theories; sooner I'd swallow  
The superstitions and fables absurd  
Concocted and fed to the common herd.

## SECOND ACT

The Son of Zeus, Like Unto a Son of Man, Is Made  
Captive

(*Re-enter* PENTHEUS. *Enter a* CAPTAIN *and Soldiers,*  
*leading their Captive, DIONYSOS.*)

## CAPTAIN

King Pentheus, we are present, having caught  
The prey thou bid'st us track; success we had.  
This game of ours, this creature of the wild,  
Was tame and took not timidly to flight,  
But voluntarily consigned himself  
Into our keeping, and his wine-red cheek  
Paled not. He only smiled and bade us bind  
And lead him thence; then quietly he stood,  
To lighten thus my task. And I, abashed,  
Then said, "O stranger, not of mine own will  
I lead thee captive, but by the command  
Of Pentheus, sending me to track thee down."

'Tis otherwise with those demented women,  
The captured Bakchic worshippers whom thou  
Didst hold in chains within the common prison:  
For they are gone, unchained, and in the meadows  
Are dancing and invoking Bromios,  
Their God. Their manacles and fetters fell,  
Self-sundered, to the ground; the bolted doors  
Opened without the touch of mortal hand.  
Aye; full of many miracles this man  
Cometh to Thebes. The rest is thy concern.

## PENTHEUS

Ye rave! When once mine hands have gripped this fellow,  
Howe'er adroit, he'll not escape from me.

And yet, O stranger, as regards thy form  
 Thou'rt not uncomely, even to the women,  
 And that's the very reason thou'rt in Thebes.  
 From thy long curls, that thick and lovingly  
 Dangle adown thy cheeks, 'tis evident  
 Thou art no wrestler. 'Tis a fair complexion  
 Thou hast acquired, not from the burning sunbeams,  
 But in umbrageous forests, following  
 In chase of Aphrodite with thy beauty.

To start with, tell me of what race thou art.

DIONYSOS

Nothing to boast of, but without reluctance  
 It may be told. By hearsay haply thou  
 Dost know of Tmolos, likened to a flower.

PENTHEUS

I know; it doth enwall the town of Sardis.

DIONYSOS

Thence am I; Lydia is my fatherland.

PENTHEUS

But whence didst thou receive these Mysteries  
 Which thou art celebrating now in Hellas?

DIONYSOS

Lord Dionysos, who is verily  
 The Son of Zeus, initiated me.

PENTHEUS

Oho! Abideth in that distant land  
 A certain Zeus who doth beget fresh Gods?

DIONYSOS

Nay; Zeus it was, the Father's very self,  
 Who here in Thebes made Semele his bride.

PENTHEUS

Dreaming wast thou, or open-eyed, when this  
Entrancing spirit took control of thee?

DIONYSOS

Beholding and beheld, the Son of Zeus  
Unveiled to me his mighty Mysteries.

PENTHEUS

What are these Mysteries? What visible  
Appearances were bodied forth to thee?

DIONYSOS

That may not be divulged to any who  
Are not initiated in the rites  
Of Bakcheus; neither would they understand.

PENTHEUS

What use, then, are they to his worshippers?

DIONYSOS

Well worth it were for thee to know these things,  
And yet the right to know them is not thine.

PENTHEUS

Adroitly hast thou made thy bait attractive,  
So as to lead me on to be thy pupil.

DIONYSOS

Nay; for the sacred Mysteries of the God  
Abhor the worker of iniquity.

PENTHEUS

Well, since thou sayest thou didst plainly see  
The God, what certain form distinguished him?

DIONYSOS

Whatever form it pleased him to assume:  
'Twas not a thing for me to classify.

PENTHEUS

Again thou hast made answer to my question  
Evasively, and telling naught at all.

DIONYSOS

Whoever speaketh to an ignoramus  
Of learned things doth seem to him demented.

PENTHEUS

And comest thou primarily to Thebes  
Here to establish this Divinity?

DIONYSOS

All they who dwell in Oriental lands  
Are celebrating chorally his rites.

PENTHEUS

Aye, they are far more prone to turn their minds  
To flighty mysticism than are the Hellenes.

DIONYSOS

Thereby they show their superiority;  
Their old-established faith is advantageous.

PENTHEUS

Is it at night or in the day that thou  
Dost celebrate initiatory rites?

DIONYSOS

Most oft by night: for when the dark doth veil  
Externals, it doth add solemnity.

PENTHEUS

'Tis also hazardous to women's frailty.

DIONYSOS

Nay; any one who may be so inclined  
Can find temptation quite as well by daylight.

PENTHEUS

Thou for thy vile pretensions must be punished.

DIONYSOS

And thou for thine impervious ignorance,  
And for thy having sinned against the God.

PENTHEUS

How very bold this Bakchic prophet is,  
And not untrained in verbal disputation.

DIONYSOS

Pronounce whatever 'tis that I must suffer.  
What frightful torture wilt thou put me to?

PENTHEUS

First, I'll clip off those pretty curls of thine.

DIONYSOS

My curls, thus thick and long, are consecrated:  
I cherish them in worship of the God.

PENTHEUS

Next, hand thou over unto me thy thyrsus.

DIONYSOS

Do thou thyself thus rob me. 'Tis the sceptre  
Of mighty Dionysos that I carry.

PENTHEUS

And in a prison I'll confine thy body.

DIONYSOS

The God himself, whene'er I will, shall free me.

PENTHEUS

Aye; when, forsooth, thou art again amongst  
His worshippers, and dost invoke thy Bakcheus!

DIONYSOS

Right now he standeth in our very presence,  
And doth behold the wrongs I undergo.

PENTHEUS

But where? For he is viewless to mine eyes.

DIONYSOS

Beside me. Thou, profane, canst not discern him.

PENTHEUS

Seize ye this knave! He mocketh me and Thebes.

DIONYSOS

I, who am sane, command that thou shalt not  
In thine insanity put chains on me.

PENTHEUS

I, having more authority than thou,  
Command my servants quickly to enchain thee.

DIONYSOS

Thou dost not know for what it is thou livest,  
Nor what thou dost, nor whosoe'er thou art.

PENTHEUS

Pentheus am I, Agave's kingly son;  
Echion, earth-engendered, is my father.



## DIONYSOS

'Tis an appropriate name they chose for thee:  
Aye, "Mourner," who art to misfortune destined.

## PENTHEUS

Begone! Encradle him within the manger  
Hard by, where munch the steeds, that he may stare  
Into the darkling gloom. And there trussed up,  
Do thou make merry! And these girl-disciples  
Whom tagging after thee thou hast brought hither,  
Accomplices of thine in vicious rites,  
I'll either sell as chattels, or shall hold  
As handmaids, so that toiling at the looms  
No more they'll thump and thrum their tambourines.

## DIONYSOS

I go. For that which Fate hath not in store  
'Tis not my fate to suffer. But on thee  
Shall Dionysos, whose existence thou  
Deniest, visit justly thy transgressions.  
For verily in wronging me thou dost  
Lead captive and in chains the God himself.

[*Exeunt* DIONYSOS, *guarded*, and PENTHEUS.]

## SECOND CHORAL INTERLUDE

**The Prophet-Maidens Call upon Their Lord to Succor  
Them Who Are Persecuted for His Sake**

## CHORUS

O Dirke, thou daughter, majestic and queenly, *Strophe.*  
Of great Acheloös, 'twas thou who of yore  
To thy fountain baptismal didst welcome serenely  
The offspring of Zeus that Semele bore,

When Zeus, the Sire, from the fire undying  
 Transferred him unharmed to the thigh divine,  
 Ensconsing him snugly, and unto him crying:  
 "Come hither, Twice-born; in this womb of mine,  
 A masculine matrix, rest thee securely.

O Prophet-God, unto Thebes I proclaim  
 That thou, my Son, who wast born prematurely,  
 Shalt ever be called by that name."  
 But Oh, blessed Dirke, thy hand presseth heavy  
 And thrusteth me hence as I bring to thy side  
 A band of adorers of Bakcheus, a bevy  
 Of maidens inspired and dreamy-eyed.  
 Ah! why is our garlanded festival driven  
 In scorn from thy presence? Yet truly I swear  
 By the grape-clustered vine Dionysos hath given  
 That thou for the Prophet-God shalt care.

Intolerant Pentheus, the son of Echion,     *Antistrophe.*  
 Betrays by his conduct the source of his birth,  
 That he, like his father, is truly a scion  
 Begot by the Dragon, and born of the earth.  
 A monster with features distorted, defiant,  
 Not man, mortal-vestured, is Pentheus, it seems,  
 But rather a frenzied and murderous giant  
 At war with the Gods that he vilely blasphemes.  
 And me, the Bakcheus-adoring maiden,  
 Forthwith he will pinion with cruel cords;  
 He has cast my companion, fetter-laden,  
 In a murky dungeon, O Lord of lords!  
 O Dionysos, whom Zeus doth cherish  
 As the Son best-belovèd, thou dost behold

Thy Seers persecuted and fated to perish  
Unless thou dost save with thy sceptre of gold.  
Come Saviour! From heights of Olympos descending,  
With thyrsus gold-gleaming exhibit thy might,  
And save thy Seers from the doom impending,  
Restraining the rage of the murderous wight.

Perchance art thou shepherding, thyrsus in hand, *Epode.*  
O Dionysos, thy votary-band  
On Nysa, the mountain where none who stray  
Are safe from the prowling beasts of prey?  
Or art thou observing thy hallowed rites  
In the cavern beneath the Korykian heights?  
Or may-be teaching the magical sounds  
In the craggy glen the forest surrounds,  
On Mount Olympos, the woodland glade  
Where Orpheus of old such music made  
On the seven-stringed lyre that trees, entranced,  
In a leafy circle around him danced,  
And all the beasts of the wild became  
His adoring followers, docile and tame?

Pieria, haunt of the Muses nine,  
The bliss of the deathless Gods is thine,  
For the Lord of Melody honors thee,  
And hither shall come, in response to our plea,  
To join in the festival we hold  
For him, the God with the wand of gold.  
Ah, leaping across from the further side  
Of the Axios River's rushing tide,  
He shall hasten hitherward at the head  
Of his votary-maidens garlanded,

Whose eyes with prophetic frenzy gleam;  
 And soon he shall cross the Lydian stream,  
 The bountiful giver, to mortals who toil,  
 Of the honest wealth of the fertile soil,  
 And the Father of Rivers, rightly named,  
 That richly waters the country famed  
 For the glorious horses Poseidon tamed.

### THIRD ACT

#### FIRST SCENE

**The Son of Zeus Heareth and Answereth the Supplication of His Adorers**

DIONYSOS (*within the Palace*)

What ho!

Hear ye, hear ye my voice!

Ye maidens plunged in woe,

I bid you now rejoice.

[*Members of CHORUS answer severally.*]

CHORUS 1

Who calls?

And why art thou viewless to me?

Is the voice that upon my hearing falls

The voice of the Lord of Melody?

DIONYSOS

What ho! What ho!

Again I am shouting, that ye may know

'Tis verily I, your champion,

Of Zeus and of Semele the Son.

CHORUS 2

All-hail, our Master, the Ivy-crowned!

Come now to our festival, Lord of Sound!

## DIONYSOS

O Sound, thou formative Queen, august,  
With an earthquake sway the Earth's firm crust.

## CHORUS 3

Aha! The palace of Pentheus, the rash,  
To the quaking ground in ruins shall crash.

## CHORUS 4

Adore Dionysos! Our Lord hath risen  
To shatter the massive walls of his prison!

## CHORUS 5

In truth we adore him! He hath not forsaken  
His faithful ones, but doth come to his own.  
For lo and behold, the vestibule, shaken,  
Now falls with its shattered pillars of stone!  
And the Lord of Sound, the halls within,  
Triumphantly shouteth above the din.

## DIONYSOS

To the blazing torch of the thunderbolt doomed,  
Let the palace of Pentheus be wholly consumed.

## CHORUS

Ah! Dost thou not see now the flames upcurling  
From the palace of Pentheus? Behold, they illumine  
The hapless Semele's hallowed tomb,  
Which our Lord, who is now the thunderbolt hurling  
And letting the dazzling lightnings loose,  
Hath left as a token fore'er to remind  
Forgetful and fatuous humankind  
Of the gleaming robes of the Thunder Zeus.

## CHORUS-LEADER

To the ground your tremulous bodies fling,  
 Yea, fall on your faces prone,  
 Ye prophet-maidens; for lo, our King,  
 The belovèd of Zeus, hath overthrown  
 The house of our foe, and cometh now  
 To our festival, waving his golden bough.

[CHORUS *fall face-downward. Enter DIONYSOS from  
 the Palace.*]

## DIONYSOS

Orient maidens, was't by terror  
 to the ground ye thus were felled,  
 There to lie in stupefaction?  
 Bakcheus, surely, ye beheld  
 Shake asunder Pentheus' palace!  
 Come, take courage now afresh;  
 Rise, and upright keep the body,  
 still the trembling of the flesh.

## CHORUS

Hail, O Light, who art the brightest  
 in communions of the Blest!  
 Lone, deserted, till I saw thee,  
 now what rapture fills my breast!

## DIONYSOS

Did ye, then, become disheartened  
 when I entered, and ye deemed  
 Into Pentheus' murky pitfall  
 I should fall as he had schemed?

## CHORUS

Surely! What protector have I,  
shouldst thou meet with dire mischance?  
How, when snared by one so evil,  
didst thou gain deliverance?

## DIONYSOS

Easily, without an effort,  
I myself my freedom gained.

## CHORUS

Did he not in prison hold thee,  
with thy limbs securely chained?

## DIONYSOS

Him I flouted; for he fancied  
he was fettering my limbs,  
Yet he did not touch or bind me:  
glamour prompted all his whims.  
At the manger where he purposed  
me to pen, he found a bull.  
Round its knees and hoofs he cast the  
fettters and began to pull,  
Gasping curses, while his features  
wilder grew and yet more wild,  
And he gnawed his lips; yet calmly  
I beside him watched and smiled,  
Undisturbed, and free from fettters.  
Then it was that Bakcheus came,  
With an earthquake shook the palace,  
wreathed his mother's tomb with flame.  
Pentheus, seeing this, deluded,  
thought the palace was ablaze.

Hither, thither, then he rushed, and  
    bade his servants, in a daze,  
Water bring in floods, and every  
    man toiled uselessly and gaped.  
But he quit his labor, fearing  
    I, his captive, had escaped.  
Thereupon within the palace  
    sword in hand he madly dashed.  
Bromios fashioned then a phantom  
    in the hall—for so it flashed  
On mine inner vision. Pentheus  
    saw it there, and through and through  
Stabbed the form of shining æther,  
    thinking 'twas myself he slew.  
Bakcheus with a fresh disaster  
    these humiliations crowned,  
For he shook the palace till it  
    fell in ruins to the ground,  
Rending, so it seemed to Pentheus,  
    my intolerable chains.  
Then he dropped his sword, exhausted  
    by his frantic toil and pains.  
He, a puny mortal, dared to  
    wield the sword against a God!  
Coming hither then to greet you,  
    from the hall I calmly trod,  
Paying no more heed to Pentheus.  
    Yet methinks a sound I hear  
In the ruined hall, and doubtless  
    'tis his footfall drawing near;



Straightway he will come upon us,  
  here without. What will he say  
When he sees, amid these ruins,  
  me, whom erst he sought to slay?  
Courteously shall I hear him,  
  though he comes outbreathing rage;  
For a mild and even temper  
  rules the conduct of a sage.

[*Enter PENTHEUS.*]

PENTHEUS

Frightful adventures have I had. The stranger  
Hath from my hands escaped, though just before  
His bonds constrained him like the grip of Fate.  
Ha! There's the fellow! What's this miracle?  
How is't that thou appearest openly  
Before my palace, whence thou didst escape?

DIONYSOS

Stand back, and set thy wrath a gentle pace.

PENTHEUS

By what miraculous resource didst thou  
Escape thy bonds and win thy way without?

DIONYSOS

Did not I say, or didst thou hear me not,  
"A certain Mighty One shall set me free"?

PENTHEUS

Who? Novel answers thou art ever giving.

DIONYSOS

He who doth cause the many-clustered vine  
To flourish and to yield its fruit to mortals.

PENTHEUS

[Aye; but the vintage of thy God doth cause  
His worshippers to rave and prophesy.]

DIONYSOS

In casting this reproach on Dionysos  
Thou speakest verily in praise of him.

PENTHEUS (*to Attendants*)

I bid ye bar all gates about the city.

DIONYSOS

Why? Can not Gods leap even over walls?

PENTHEUS

Clever art thou, save where thou shouldst be clever.

DIONYSOS

In those concerns where most it is required,  
By nature I'm inclined to cleverness.  
But first give ear to yonder messenger,  
Who cometh from the mountains, bringing thee  
Important news. Do thou attend his words.  
I shall remain with thee, and not take flight.

## SECOND SCENE

**A Messenger Bringeth Tidings of the Miracles Wrought  
by the Frenzied Women**

[*Enter HERDSMAN*]

HERDSMAN

O Pentheus, ruler of this Theban land,  
I come from Mount Kithairon, where the glitter  
Of white, unsullied snow doth never cease.

PENTHEUS

What grave announcement art thou come to make?

## HERDSMAN

I have beheld those women who are wildly  
Invoking Bakcheus, those who ran away  
Bare-footed, stung to frenzy, from this land,  
And I in haste am come, O King, to tell  
Thyself and Thebes of their amazing feats,  
Surpassing miracles. Yet I desire  
To learn if I shall openly narrate  
To thee the doings there, or shorten sail  
In my narration; for I fear, O King,  
Thy mind's impulsiveness, thy vehemence  
Of temper, and exceeding lordliness.

## PENTHEUS

Speak out; for thou shalt not in any way  
Be harmed by me. We should not be incensed  
At truthful men. The more thou heightenest  
Thy dreadful story of the worshippers  
Of Bakcheus, all the more severe shall be  
The punishment I shall inflict on him  
Who taught our women these pestiferous arts.

## HERDSMAN

Thy herds of grazing cattle were of late  
Climbing the rocky hillside, as the sun  
At break of day was sending forth his beams  
To warm the earth, when I beheld three bands  
Of female votaries. Autonöë  
Was chief of one; Agave, thine own mother,  
Chief of the second; Ino of the third.  
They all were slumbering, with forms relaxed:  
Some were reclining on the drooping boughs

Of pine-trees; others on the ground were lying,  
Their heads on oak-leaves pillowed, carelessly,  
But modestly, and not, as thou asseratest,  
Made drunken by the sacramental bowl  
And by the sensuous crooning of the flutes;  
Nor do they in the woodland solitudes  
Pursue like huntresses the quest of love.  
Then suddenly thy mother, when she heard  
The lowing of our hornèd cattle, sprang  
Midmost the bands and raised the sacred cry,  
"From sleep arouse the mortal form!" And they,  
Brushing the haze of slumber from their eyes,  
Sprang up, a wondrous vision of decorum,  
Young wives and elderly, and tender maidens.  
Primly they loosed their hair, to ripple down  
Their shoulders, and adjusted tidily  
Their fawn-skins, wheresoe'er a fastening  
Had fallen loose, and girt those dappled skins  
About them with strange cinctures—writhing serpents  
With quivering tongues! Some of the votaries  
Clasped fawns and savage wolf-cubs to their breasts,  
And suckled them. These members of the bands  
Were mothers who had left their suckling babes  
At home uncared for. Then the votaries  
Bedecked themselves with wreathes of ivy, oak,  
And flowering yew. And one upraised her thyrsus  
And smote the rock, and thereupon a rill  
Of sparkling water gushed. Another planted  
Her reed-staff in the ground, and through its hollow  
The God sent forth a bubbling fount of wine.  
But all who thirsted for a milder drink

Touched coaxingly with finger-tips the ground,  
Drawing therefrom sweet rivulets of milk,  
Whilst from their ivy-garnished thyrsus-wands  
Delicious honey copiously flowed.  
Hadst thou been there, O King, and hadst beheld  
These miracles, thou wouldst have bowed in prayer  
Before the God whom now thou dost traduce.

Then we, the herdsmen and the shepherds there,  
Gathered together to debate the matter,  
[As they performed their weird, astounding feats.]  
A certain man, familiar with the ways  
Of city folk, and ready with his tongue,  
Cried out to all, "Is it your will, O ye  
Who dwell upon the sacred terraces  
Of mountains, that we chase Agave, mother  
Of Pentheus, from the Bakchic festival,  
And do our king a kindness?" What he said  
Seemed good to us; so, hiding in a thicket,  
We lay in ambush. At the time appointed  
The votaries, accordant with the rites  
Of Bakcheus, rhythmically shook the thyrsus,  
And all, as with a single tongue, invoked  
Iakchos, Lord of Melody, the Son  
Of Zeus. Then all the mountain, yea, and all  
The creatures of the wild adored with them  
Lord Dionysos; nothing in their course  
Remained unmoved. It happened that Agave  
Came dancing near me, and I made a dash  
From out the thicket where I lay concealed,  
Meaning to seize her. But she raised a shout:  
"Halloo, my coursing hounds, we're being hunted

By these wild men! Come, follow me! Come on,  
Armed for the fray with thyrsus-javelins!"  
Ah, then indeed we fled, and scarce escaped  
The rending clutches of those frenzied women.  
They then attacked, with swordless hand, our cattle,  
That browsed the herbage. Then thou hadst beheld  
Thy mother rend asunder with her hands  
A bellowing plump-uddered heifer there,  
Whilst others likewise tore the calves to shreds.  
Aye, thou hadst seen the ribs and cloven hoofs  
Hurtled this way and that, and strips of flesh,  
Blood-dripping, hanging from the pines. And bulls,  
Untamable and to their very horns  
Provoked to rage, headforemost to the earth  
Were hurled, and by the hands of many maidens  
Dragged down. The vesture of their flesh was torn  
In shreds more quickly than thou couldst have closed  
Thy royal eyes. And then the votaries,  
Like birds in ground-disdaining flight, swept on  
Unto the lowland fields which by the River  
Asopos yield rich harvest to the Thebans.  
On Hysiæ and Erythræ, which beneath  
Kithairon's craggy slope are situate,  
They swooped like warriors, tossing topsyturvy  
All things encountered. Oh, they even kidnapped  
The children from the houses! These and all  
Their varied spoils they carried on their shoulders,  
Not held or tied at all, yet not a thing,  
Not even heavy implements of iron  
Or bronze, dropped to the ground. And on their heads  
They carried firebrands twisted in their locks,

Yet not a hair was singed. The villagers,  
 Enraged at being pillaged by the bands  
 Of votaries, directly rushed to arms.  
 And then, O King, thou wouldst indeed have seen  
 A startling spectacle. The keen-barbed arrows  
 Ne'er made a scratch, or drew a drop of blood  
 From those wild votaries, but they kept stabbing  
 With thyrsus-staves, inflicting grievous wounds;  
 And so the women turned the men to flight,  
 But not without a certain God's assistance.  
 The women then withdrew, returning to  
 Those same mysterious fountains that their God  
 Had sent outgushing from the ground to them.  
 They washed away the blood; and from their necks  
 The serpents with their tongues licked up the blood-gouts.  
 Therefore, O King, whoe'er this God may be,  
 Receive him graciously to Thebes, thy city,  
 For his is an especial greatness; yea,  
 They say of him, I hear, that this is he  
 Who gave the sorrow-soothing vine to mortals.  
 Lacking this wine of his, Love faileth ever,  
 And there abideth then none other solace.

[Exit.

## CHORUS

I shrink from speaking frankly to a monarch,  
 Yet shall the truth be spoken: Dionysos  
 More mighty is by birth than any God.

## THIRD SCENE

**The King Is Placed Under a Spell**

## PENTHEUS

Already hath it neared, as 'twere a fire  
 Covertly kindled, this vile craze and cult

Of Bakchic worshippers, a great discredit  
 To Hellas. Speedy action must be taken.  
 Go thou at once to the Elektran gate  
 And bid my warriors all to meet me, all  
 Who bear the weighty shields, all them who ride  
 Fleet horses, all who shake the shining buckler,  
 And all who twang the bowstring; for anon  
 We'll take the field against the worshippers  
 Of Bakcheus. Verily this doth exceed  
 All bounds, that we should suffer at the hands  
 Of women what we now are suffering!

## DIONYSOS

Thou'rt not converted, Pentheus, though thou hearest  
 Mine eloquent appeal. Yet, notwithstanding  
 I suffer evil at thy hands, I say,  
 Thou must not take up arms against a God,  
 But must make peace. Because the God of Sound  
 Will not allow thee ever to expel  
 His worshippers from their enchanted mountain.

## PENTHEUS

Instruct not me! But having from thy bondage  
 Escaped, wilt thou not keep it fresh in mind?  
 Or shall I now repeat thy punishment?

## DIONYSOS

Well, I had rather offer up to him  
 A victim, than as mortal man vent spite  
 Upon a God, and kick against the pricks.

## PENTHEUS

Aye; I shall make a sacrifice of women,



Deserving to be slaughtered, when I rout  
Their bands that now infest Kithairon's glens.

DIONYSOS

Nay; ye shall all take flight; and this shall be  
Your ignominy, that your bronze-forged shields  
Ye turned, and fled before the ivied wands,  
The weapons of the worshippers of Bakcheus.

PENTHEUS

'Tis with a wrestler difficult to throw  
That I have come to grips, this stranger who,  
Whether he doth endure distressful strain  
Or gain the upper hand, will not keep silent.

DIONYSOS

Good friend, this unpropitious circumstance  
May yet be carried to a happy issue.

PENTHEUS

By what procedure? By myself becoming  
A slavish subject to my women-subjects?

DIONYSOS

I, weaponless, shall bring the women hither.

PENTHEUS

Aha! Thou art devising now a trap,  
To catch me by an act of treachery.

DIONYSOS

What sort of trap? Nay; by my mystic arts  
I would protect thee from the frantic women.

PENTHEUS

But ye have made a covenant together  
To hold fore'er the Bakchic Mysteries.

DIONYSOS

However, rest assured that only with  
The God himself I made this covenant.

PENTHEUS

Ho, ye! Bring hither unto me mine arms  
And armor. As for thee, do thou keep silence.

DIONYSOS

Ah! Art thou minded to behold the maidens  
Among the mountains sitting in assembly?

PENTHEUS

Aye, that above all else, although I pay  
Their weight in gold to see the spectacle.

DIONYSOS

Why art thou seized by this intense desire?

PENTHEUS

With pain would I behold them wine-befuddled.

DIONYSOS

Yet wouldst thou gladly see that which would pain thee?

PENTHEUS

Why, most assuredly. In silence crouching  
Beneath the pines, I'd feast mine eyes on them.

DIONYSOS

Nay; but the votaries will track thee there,  
E'en though thou comest on them stealthily.

PENTHEUS

Then openly! For rightly hast thou spoken.

DIONYSOS

Then shall I lead thee? Wilt thou try my course?

PENTHEUS

Lead on at once. I grudge thee this delay.

DIONYSOS

Now, then, in flowing garments cloak thy form.

PENTHEUS

Why this disguise? Shall I, who am a man,  
Into a dressy woman be converted?

DIONYSOS

Aye, lest the women slay thee, if it happed  
That thou, who art a man, wert seen by them.

PENTHEUS

Shrewd is thine observation, even as  
Thou wast quite clever but awhile ago.

DIONYSOS

Lord Dionysos' trained me in these arts.

PENTHEUS

How, then, may thine advice be carried out?

DIONYSOS

I'll go within thy house, and dress thee there.

PENTHEUS

What dress? A woman's? Nay, I'd suffer shame!

DIONYSOS

Art thou no longer eager to become  
A near spectator of the prophet-maids?

PENTHEUS

What costume is it thou dost say thou wouldst  
Put on my manly form for a disguise?

DIONYSOS

I shall adorn thy head with dangling curls.

PENTHEUS

And what will be the next device of fashion  
Wherewith thou shalt attire me modishly?

DIONYSOS

Long skirts; and round thy head I'll tie a riband.

PENTHEUS

Wilt thou add aught beside to mine apparel?

DIONYSOS

Yea; I shall place a thyrsus in thy hand,  
And shall array thee in a dappled fawn-skin.

PENTHEUS

I could not wear the garments of a woman!

DIONYSOS

And yet if with the prophet-maids thou dost  
Engage in battle, thou wilt spill their blood.

PENTHEUS

Aye, true! To reconnoitre first I'll go.

DIONYSOS

That, surely, is a more judicious course  
Than hunting evil with an evil motive.

PENTHEUS

But how am I, thus like a woman dressed,  
To go unnoticed through the town of Thebes?

DIONYSOS

We'll go through lonely streets. I'll show the way.

## PENTHEUS

Better were anything than that I should  
 Be made a laughing-stock by those mad women  
 Who worship Bakcheus. I shall go within  
 The house, and fix upon a seemly costume.

## DIONYSOS

Permit me—'tis my part, in every way,  
 To lend assistance in thy preparations.

## PENTHEUS

Would I were on the way! Either I'll go  
 With arms accoutred, or—O well, of course,  
 I am complying with this scheme of thine.

[*Exit.*

## DIONYSOS

Maidens, the man is tangled in the net!  
 To those wild Bakchic women he shall go,  
 And by his death shall pay the penalty.  
 Lord Dionysos, finish now the work,  
 For thou art near us. Let us punish him.  
 Do thou disorder first his mind, implanting  
 Light-headed madness, since most certainly  
 While prudent-minded he will not be willing  
 To don a woman's dress; but when his mind  
 Is giddy, he will don it. And I long  
 To make him thus the laughing-stock of Thebes,  
 In woman-semblance guided through the streets,  
 After the former terrors of his threats.  
 I go. On Pentheus I shall place the garments  
 Which he, when slain by his own mother's hands,  
 Shall wear upon his journey down to Hades.  
 Yea; he shall know that the belovèd Son

Of Zeus, King Dionysos, born a God,  
 Lord of the Mysteries, is mightiest  
 Of all the Gods, yet unto men the kindest. [Exit.]

### THIRD CHORAL INTERLUDE

**The Prophet-Maidens Extol All Them Who Are Open-  
 minded, Magnanimous, and Diligent in the  
 Pursuit of Wisdom**

#### CHORUS

With pearly feet shall I delight *Strophe.*  
 Again to dance the livelong night,  
 Entranced, my throat and bosom bare  
 Uptilted to the dewy air?  
 Ah, dancing thus from eve to dawn,  
 I'd then be like a joyous fawn  
 That in a mead's glad verdure plays,  
 When she erewhile, through winding ways,  
 The terrifying hunt had fled,  
 Eluding watchers, who had spread  
 Well-woven nets, concealed from view,  
 The while the hunters' loud halloo  
 Cheered on their course the baying hounds.  
 With bursts of tempest-speed she bounds  
 Along the river's winding glade,  
 Till sheltered in the woodland shade,  
 No more by ruthless man pursued,  
 She gambols in the solitude.

What wiser or more beauteous gift  
 On mortals can the Gods bestow  
 Than this: when helpless lies the foe,  
 O'er his defenceless head to lift



Entranced, my throat and bosom bare  
Uptilted to the dewy air.





The proud victorious hand of might,  
 Then draw it back, refuse to smite?  
 The splendid courage that above  
 Revengeful passion rises thus  
 Flows ever from the fount of love  
 Within the soul magnanimous.

Ah, slow but sure, the Power Divine     *Antistrophe.*  
 Evolves its marvelous design.  
 Its guiding hand is sternly laid  
 On mortals who have blindly made  
 A cult of nescience, and it prods  
 All them who honor not the Gods  
 But madly cling to creeds untrue.  
 And having subtly veiled from view  
 Time's lengthy stride, the Gods fore'er  
 Chase sinful scoffing to its lair.  
 To gain true wisdom—shown by deeds—  
 Is this not better than on creeds  
 To pin one's faith? No creed can chain  
 The mind that grasps this truth arcane,  
 That Wisdom is the Essence prime  
 Of the Eternal Self sublime,  
 While creeds, that last a little span,  
 Sprout only in the brain of man.

What wiser or more beauteous gift  
 On mortals can the Gods bestow  
 Than this: when helpless lies the foe,  
 O'er his defenceless head to lift  
 The proud victorious hand of might,  
 Then draw it back, refuse to smite?

The splendid courage that above  
 Revengeful passion rises thus  
 Flows ever from the fount of love  
 Within the soul magnanimous.

Oh, blest is the sailor whose ship outrides *Epode.*  
 The raging tempest, the ocean's rancor,  
 Till safely into the harbor it glides,  
 And he furls the sail and drops the anchor.  
 And blest is the toiler who tries to redouble  
 His strenuous efforts to finish his task,  
 For when 'tis concluded, well paid for his trouble,  
 He then may at ease in the sunshine bask.  
 When different persons, of various classes,  
 Are rivals in business, by force or by stealth  
 There always is one who directly surpasses  
 The others in struggling for power and wealth.  
 Yet in myriad hearts are myriad hopes,  
 And some to their fruitage we cherish,  
 But some, like a bud that never opes,  
 Unfruitfully wither and perish.  
 He only is truly blessed, I deem,  
 Whose life is daily a mystical dream.

#### FOURTH ACT

The King Goeth Forth to Spy Upon Them Who  
 Worship on the Enchanted Mountain

[Enter DIONYSOS.]

DIONYSOS

Thou, Pentheus, who art eager to behold  
 The rites which thou art fated not to see,  
 And furtherest with zeal an enterprise

Unworthy of thy zeal, do thou come forth  
Before thy halls; to me display thyself  
Apparelled like a Bakchic prophetess,  
To spy upon thy mother and her band.

[Enter PENTHEUS.]

Why, with thy form in feminine attire  
Thou dost resemble one of Kadmos' daughters!

PENTHEUS

Upon my word, I seem to see two suns,  
Also a twofold Thebes, this seven-gated  
City of ours! And thou dost seem a bull  
Going before me, and upon thy head  
Are horns. But wast thou just awhile ago  
An animal? For, sure, thou'rt now a bull.

DIONYSOS

The God, who was not gracious just before,  
Doth walk beside us now, allied with us;  
And now thou dost perceive things as thou shouldst.

PENTHEUS

What, really, do I look like? Have I not  
Ino's august deportment, or my mother  
Agave's dignified and stately bearing?

DIONYSOS

I seem to see their very selves when'er  
I gaze on thee. But, see, this curl of thine  
Hath strayed from its correct position under  
The riband, where before I tucked it neatly.

PENTHEUS

When in the house, I disarranged that curl,  
Tossing it up and down in Bakchic rapture.

DIONYSOS

Well, since I'm doing service as thy maid,  
I'll readjust it. But, hold up thy head.

PENTHEUS

There! Rearrange correctly mine apparel;  
For I depend on thee implicitly.

DIONYSOS

Thy girdle, too, is loosened; and thy skirts,  
With wrinkled folds, reach not below thine ankles.

PENTHEUS

Aye, toward my right foot, so they seem to me;  
But to the left the skirt's beside the ankle.

DIONYSOS

Thou shalt regard me as thy truest friend  
When thou hast seen, despite thine expectation,  
That Bakchic worshippers are chaste and sober.

PENTHEUS

In my right hand or in the left should I  
Carry the thyrsus, that I may resemble  
Convincingly a Bakchic votary?

DIONYSOS

In thy right hand, and lift it, beating time,  
Each step of thy right foot. And heartily  
Do I approve of thy converted soul!

PENTHEUS

Would I be able in mine arms to carry  
Kithairon's glens and all those prophet-maidens?

DIONYSOS

Thou wouldst be able if it were thy will.  
Thy soul, before conversion, was infirm,  
But now thou hast such powers as thou shouldst have.

PENTHEUS

Shall we take crowbars? Or shall I by hand,  
Thrusting mine arm or shoulder underneath  
Its craggy peaks, upheave it from its base?

DIONYSOS

Nay; do it not, for so thou wouldst demolish  
The grotto-habitations of the Nymphs,  
And leafy haunts where Pan doth pipe divinely.

PENTHEUS

Well said! 'Tis not by force that I must conquer  
The women. In the pines I'll hide my body.

DIONYSOS

Thou'lt hide it in that proper hiding-place  
Where Fate ordaineth that it shall be hidden,  
Thou who art going stealthily to spy  
Upon the raptured votaries of Bakcheus.

PENTHEUS

Assuredly I see them, in my fancy,  
Like birds that flitter in the shrubbery,  
Caught in the toils of sweetest dalliance.

DIONYSOS

Then to this very end thou art appointed  
A watcher: thou shalt catch them, possibly,  
If thou art not the first that shall be caught.

PENTHEUS

Conduct me through the centre of the city  
Of Thebes. I am, of all its citizens,  
The only man who dareth that mishap.

DIONYSOS

'Tis only thou who art distressed for Thebes,  
Thou only. Wherefore trials foreordained  
Await thee. Follow me; thy saviour-guide  
Am I who go before thee. But another  
Shall bring thee thence—

PENTHEUS

Yea, even she who bore me.

DIONYSOS

Remarked by all.

PENTHEUS

For that I make the venture.

DIONYSOS

Returning, thou'lt be carried—

PENTHEUS

Am I feeble?

DIONYSOS

By thine own mother.

PENTHEUS

Pomp thou'dst force upon me!

DIONYSOS

Such pomp, indeed,—

PENTHEUS

As is my royal due.

## DIONYSOS

Thou'rt marvelous, aye, marvelous, and thou  
 Shalt have a marvelous experience,  
 So that thy fame, thus won, shall rise to heaven.

[*Exit* PENTHEUS.

Agave, and ye sisters, daughters all  
 Of Kadmos, now stretch forth your arms! I bring  
 This youthful athlete to an arduous contest.  
 The victor I shall be, and Bromios.  
 The contest's outcome will make known the rest.

[*Exit.*

## FOURTH CHORAL INTERLUDE

**The Prophet-Maidens Implore Their Lord to Protect  
 the Wild Worshipers on the Mountain**

## CHORUS

Halloo, ye fleet-footed bloodhounds of Madness! *Strophe.*

Away to the pine-clad mountain-heights,  
 Where the daughters of Kadmos, delirious with gladness,  
 Are banded together in mystery-rites,  
 And rouse them to turn with fury and loathing  
 On the bigot who, by intolerance fired,  
 Has gone, disguised in a woman's clothing,  
 To spy on the maidens heaven-inspired.

The first to discover him furtively peering  
 From weathered boulder or pine on high  
 Will be his mother, and loud in the hearing  
 Of the prophet-maidens will ring her cry:  
 "What creature is this that has come to the mountains  
 To spy on the maids who with feet unshod  
 Leap over the boulders and lave in the fountains,

Ye women who worship the Prophet-God?  
 From what habitation of birth did he issue?  
 'Twas surely no mortal mother's womb,  
 For his form is not fashioned of human tissue.  
 Perchance he was whelped in the jungle-gloom  
 By a lioness, savage and carrion-sated,  
 Or he may belong to the demon-brood  
 By the hideous Gorgons propagated  
 In Libya's forbidding solitude."

Draw nigh us, O Justice, whose judgments are rightful,  
 And slay with the sword's throat-piercing thrust  
 Echion's son, this lawless, spiteful  
 And impious creature sprung of the dust.

Intolerant-minded and viciously raging      *Antistrophe.*  
 Against the Mysteries, Bakcheus, thine  
 And thy mother's, the fatuous bigot is waging  
 Implacable war upon doctrines divine;  
 With a heart malign and a purpose infernal,  
 He is trying with mortal strength, forsooth,  
 To conquer that which is fixed, eternal,  
 Invincibly armored in changeless Truth.

In the mind of man are magical portals  
 That open for him who turns aside  
 From the turbulent ways of his fellow-mortals  
 To follow the path of the purified.  
 And then he receives in generous measure  
 Both human wisdom and that of the Gods.  
 In the quest for learning I take no pleasure,  
 Nor envy the pedant whose intellect plods.



But I hold it ever my loftiest duty  
 To seek the infallible wisdom arcane  
 Revealed in the Mysteries, shown in their beauty,  
 But veiled discreetly from eyes profane.  
 For Truth comes only to seekers who fashion  
 Their lives in purity, day and night,  
 And follow the precepts of love and compassion  
 Enjoined by the Gods and the Sons of Light.

Draw nigh us, O Justice, whose judgments are rightful,  
 And slay with the sword's throat-piercing thrust  
 Echion's son, this lawless, spiteful  
 And impious creature sprung of the dust.

O Dionysos, appear in the seeming *Epode.*  
 Of a bull, or a dragon many-headed,  
 Or a lion with tawny mane outstreaming;  
 Thou Judge of all mortals, by reprobates dreaded,  
 O God of the Prophets, come to us!  
 In the coils of destruction deservedly truss  
 The sneering hunter who dares to mock  
 Thy devotees, the divinely taught,  
 And is going forth to harry the flock  
 Of women to murderous frenzy wrought.

## FIFTH AND FINAL ACT

### FIRST SCENE

**Word Is Brought of Strange Doings at the Enchanted  
 Mountain**

[*Enter MESSENGER.*]

MESSENGER

O house that was aforetime prosperous

Throughout the land of Hellas, house of that  
 Sidonian patriarch who sowed in earth  
 The Dragon's teeth, and reaped an earthborn race,  
 How I bemoan thee, though I'm but a servant!  
 [Devoted servants share their lords' misfortunes.]

## CHORUS

Ah, what misfortune is it? Dost thou bring  
 Another charge against the prophet-maidens?

## MESSENGER

Pentheus, the king, Echion's son, is dead.

## CHORUS

God of the Prophets, Lord of the Vine,  
 Mightily doth thy glory shine!

## MESSENGER

What! Dost thou truly mean what thou hast said?  
 Woman, art thou exulting o'er the sad  
 Fatality that hath befallen my lord?

## CHORUS

Only a visitor, strangers among,  
 Yet shall I warble exultant strains,  
 Pæans disguised in my foreign tongue,  
 Trembling no longer in fear of the chains.

## MESSENGER

Dost thou consider Thebes so reft of men  
 [That thou needst fear no punishment from her?]

## CHORUS

Dionysos, the God of the Seers,  
 Ruleth my spirit forever.

Thebes, that lawlessly domineers,  
Never shall govern me, never!

## MESSENGER

That thou art foreign were a good excuse  
For thee, O woman, save that 'tis ungracious  
Thus to rejoice o'er our complete disaster.

## CHORUS

Say on, and tell me the story.  
How died the iniquitous man?  
Did he meet his doom all gory,  
Engaged in his villainous plan?

## MESSENGER

After we left the Theban dwelling-places  
We crossed the Asopos River and began  
To climb the rocky slope of Mount Kithairon,  
Pentheus and I—for I was following  
My master—and the stranger who was guiding  
Us to the scene. Then in a grassy dell  
We took our station, treading silently  
And speaking not, that we, unseen, might see.

There was a glen, walled round with lofty cliffs,  
Watered by rivulets, and thickly shaded  
By pine-trees, where the Bakchic votaries  
Were seated, busy with such handiwork  
As pleased them: some were wreathing ivy-sprays  
Afresh on the denuded thyrsus; others,  
Like fillies loosed from working gear and trappings,  
Care-free, were singing in responsive parts  
The choral song that doth pertain to Bakcheus.  
But Pentheus, vexed because he did not see

A multitude of women, said: "O stranger,  
Down in this shady hollow where we stand  
I can not get an unobstructed view  
Of those pretended worshippers of Bakcheus;  
But were I mounted on a knoll, or on  
A towering pine-tree, I could plainly see  
The shameful dances of the frenzied women."  
And straightway then I saw the stranger work  
A miracle: for, reaching up and grasping  
The very trunk-tip of a lofty pine,  
He pulled it down, down, down, until it touched  
The shadowy ground. E'en as a bow is bent,  
Or as a curving runner, outlined with  
The compasses, is to their circling course  
Conformed, so with his hands the stranger took  
And bent to earth that tree-trunk on the mountain,  
Performing thus a feat past mortal strength.  
Then on the branches of the pine he seated  
Pentheus, and let the tree, without a jar,  
Spring back till upright, holding it and guarding  
Lest it unseat its rider. Up it soared  
Into the airy region, with my master  
Mounted upon its back, more open to  
The sight of those mad women than were they  
To his. For hardly was he throned on high,  
Conspicuous, when verily the stranger  
Became invisible, and lo, from heaven  
A voice—'twas that, no doubt, of Dionysos—  
Cried out: "O maidens, unto you I bring  
The sceptic who doth scoff at you and me,  
And at my Mysteries. Do ye take vengeance

On him." And even as he spoke, a light  
Of sacred fire blazed skyward from the earth.  
Hushed was the heaven, the woody vale held hushed  
Its leaves, and from the creatures of the wild  
Thou couldst not hear a sound. The votaries,  
Not having clearly heard the cry, sprang up  
And cast inquiring glances round about.  
Again he called to them; and when the daughters  
Of Kadmos recognized with certainty  
That Bakcheus spoke, Agave and her sisters,  
And all the Bakchic maids, came rushing on  
To do his bidding, and as fleet were they  
In their impetuous race as carrier-doves.  
Right through the torrent in the glen they came,  
And bounding o'er the boulders, by the God  
Inspired to madness. When they saw my lord  
Seated upon the pine-tree, some of them,  
Scaling a rock that towered opposite,  
Kept violently hurling stones at him,  
And tried to javelin him with the branches  
Of pines; but others threw their thyrsus-spears  
High in the air at Pentheus—woful mark!  
Yet they effected naught; for at a height  
Beyond their reach, but hopeless of escape,  
The wretched man was seated. And at last  
They tore oak-branches off, and using these  
For levers, labored to uproot the pine;  
But when their labor failed to gain their end,  
Agave shouted, "Come, ye votaries,  
And standing in a circle grasp the trunk,  
That we may catch this lofty-mounted beast,

And that he may not noise abroad our God's  
Deep Mysteries." And laying countless hands  
Upon the pine, they tore it from the ground;  
And as it toppled over, Pentheus fell  
To earth from his exalted seat, with shrieks  
And wailing, for he knew his end was nigh.  
His mother, foremost priestess to begin  
The slaughter, fell upon him; but he tore  
The riband from his hair, that bold Agave  
Might know, and slay him not; and gently touching  
Her cheek, he cried: "O mother, it is I,  
Pentheus, indeed thy son, whom thou didst bear  
In Sire Echion's house. Be merciful  
To me, my mother! Do not for my sins  
Murder thy son." But she, with foaming lips  
And wildly rolling eyes, her mind obscured  
By mad delusions, and inspired by Bakcheus,  
Heeded him not; but grasping his left arm  
With both her hands, and bracing well her foot  
Against the ribs of her ill-fated son,  
She tore his shoulder out—not hers the strength,  
But to her hands the God imparted it.  
And Ino at the right side toiled to rend  
His flesh; Autoñoë and all the throng  
Of Bakchic worshippers were laying hold  
Of him; and cries confused in one arose,  
For he, as long as breath remained, kept groaning,  
And they kept shouting out their battle-cry.  
One carried off an arm, another took  
A shoe-clad foot; and from his ribs the flesh  
Had been stripped off. With blood-stained hands they all





A bull was his guide on the path that led  
To Hades, the dismal abode of the dead.



Were tossing to and fro the flesh of Pentheus.  
His corpse, dismembered, lieth widely scattered,  
Some fragments 'neath the jagged rocks, and some  
Among the trees and tangled underbrush,  
A search most difficult. His wretched head,  
Which, as it chanced, his mother seized, she bringeth  
Impaled upon her thyrsus-point, as 'twere  
A mountain-lion's, through Kithairon's vales,  
Leaving her sisters in their mystic dance.  
Aye, glorying in her grewsome quarry, she  
Is coming toward these walls, invoking Bakcheus,  
Her fellow-hunter, partner in the chase,  
Grandly victorious—in a victory  
The fruits whereof are tears, a mother's tears!  
Howe'er, I shall depart from this sad scene  
Before Agave cometh to the halls.  
Yea, self-control and reverence for the Gods  
Are noblest; and I hold 'tis most judicious  
For mortals to acquire and practise them.

[*Exit.*

CHORUS

Let us celebrate with a gleeful dance  
The triumph the Lord of Sound hath won;  
Let us shout exultantly o'er the mischance  
Of Pentheus, the Dragon's malevolent son,  
Who came disguised in a woman's attire  
And holding the reed of the sacred fire;  
But him the glorious thyrsus hurled  
To the murky depths of the underworld,  
And a bull was his guide on the path that led  
To Hades, the dismal abode of the dead.

O Theban women who wildly wallowed  
 In superstition, like swine in the mud,  
 Your pæans of victory shall be followed  
 By wailing and weeping with tears of blood.  
 'Twas a noble contest, ye fantasy-lovers,  
 When ye thought it a lion your hands were gripping,  
 But alas for the mother when she discovers  
 That her hands with the blood of her son are dripping!

## CHORUS-LEADER

But I behold Agave, Pentheus' mother,  
 Hastening to the halls, eyes wildly rolling.  
 Welcome ye to our God's glad festival!

## SECOND SCENE

**The Mother of the King Bringeth Home a Trophy of  
 the Chase**

[*Enter AGAVE, carrying the head of Pentheus.*]

AGAVE

Ye Asian maids, of Bakcheus singing! *Strophe.*

CHORUS

Why dost thou thus address me, why?

AGAVE

See, from the mountains I am bringing  
 A severed twig, to beautify  
 Our halls, a blessed prey I captured!

CHORUS

I see it. Surely thou wilt get  
 A welcome at our feast enraptured.

AGAVE

I captured him without a net,

A savage whelp, a little scion  
Of some ferocious lioness.

CHORUS

Where in the desert lurked this lion?

AGAVE

Kithairon—

CHORUS

Ah, Kithairon, yes?

AGAVE

His blood hath made Kithairon gory.

CHORUS

Who first upon him laid her hand?

AGAVE

'Twas I; to me belongs the glory.  
By all the consecrated band  
As "Blest Agave" I am greeted.

CHORUS

Who next?

AGAVE

'Twas Kadmos'—

CHORUS

What of him?

AGAVE

'Twas Kadmos' daughters who competed  
With me in tearing limb from limb  
The prey, though trifling was their help.  
Ah, lucky chase! I slew the whelp!  
Partake with me; we'll dine in splendor.

*Antistrophe.*

CHORUS

Partake of what? Accursed fare!

AGAVE

The game is young, its flesh is tender;  
Its chin, beneath the shaggy hair,  
With down is covered, soft and tawny.

CHORUS

'Tis plainly, by its bearded face,  
A prowling creature, bold and brawny.

AGAVE

The huntman Bakcheus, skilled in chase,  
Aroused us to the great endeavor,  
Enthusing all the huntress crew.

CHORUS

Our Hunter-King is truly clever.

AGAVE

Dost praise me?

CHORUS

Is not praise thy due?

AGAVE

The Thebans, ready-tongued when started—

CHORUS

And Pentheus, thy belovèd son—

AGAVE

Shall praise the mother, lion-hearted,  
Who caught the savage beast, and won  
A trophy he will greatly treasure.

CHORUS

Strange prey!

AGAVE

Caught strangely!

CHORUS

Dost exult?

AGAVE

Aye, truly I am filled with pleasure,  
For 'twas indeed a difficult  
And mighty hunting-feat to slay,  
In sight of all, this beast of prey.

CHORUS

Ah, hapless woman, now display to all  
The townfolk that which hither thou hast brought,  
Returning from the chase, thy hard-won prize.

AGAVE

Ye dwellers in the stately-towered town  
Of Thebes, draw nigh and gaze upon this quarry,  
This fearsome beast of prey which we, the daughters  
Of Kadmos, hunted down and slew, not with  
The thong-hurled javelins of Thessaly,  
Neither with nets, but with our naked hands.  
Then should a hunter be an idle braggart,  
And from the armorers procure his weapons?  
But we, however, with our bare hands caught  
This savage beast and tore him limb from limb.  
Where is mine aged father? Bid him come.  
And where is Pentheus, my belovèd son?  
I want him now to set a scaling-ladder  
Against the palace-wall, that he may nail  
Betwixt the sculptured figures of the frieze  
This lion's head I've brought him from the hunt.

[*Enter KADMOS, with attendants carrying a bier.*]

## KADMOS

Before the palace come with me, attendants,  
Bearing a ghastly burden, the remains  
Of Pentheus, whose dissevered corpse I found  
By search prolonged, and hither bring, not finding  
Two portions in one place; for all were scattered  
Throughout the tangled thicket. For I heard  
Of the atrocious doings of my daughters  
As soon as I, with old Teiresias,  
Returning from the Bakchic festival,  
Entered the city. I retraced my steps  
Unto the mountain; and I bring my son,  
Who by the frenzied women hath been slain.  
And I beheld Autoñoë, who erst  
To Aristaios bore ill-starred Aktaion,  
And with her Ino, piteous maniacs,  
Still roaming in the oak-grove. I was told  
By some one that Agave had come hither  
With frantic pace. No idle tale I heard,  
For I behold her, an unhappy sight.

## AGAVE

Father, 'tis thine to make thy proudest boast  
That thou hast daughters the most valorous,  
By far, of mortals. This I say of all  
Thy daughters, but especially myself,  
Who left the petty labor at the loom  
And fixed upon a loftier vocation,  
To hunt, bare-handed, savage beasts of prey.  
And in my hands I bring, as thou dost see,





And in my hands I bring, as thou dost see,  
This prize I captured.



This prize I captured, that it may be hung  
Against thy palace-wall. Do thou, my father,  
Receive it in thy hands. And filled with pride  
Over the prey I've taken, to a banquet  
Invite thy friends; for thou are blest, aye, blest,  
In that we have performed so great a deed.

## KADMOS

O measureless misfortune, which with horror  
Doth strike the sight! O murder done  
By hands most wretched! Having sacrificed  
A splendid victim to the Gods, thou dost  
Bid to the feast the Thebans and myself!  
Woe's me for our afflictions, first for thine,  
And then mine own! How justly hath the God,  
King Bromios, ruined us, and yet too justly,  
Since he belongeth to our family.

## AGAVE

How querulous and sullen men become  
In their old age! I would that in his habits  
My son were like his mother, and were lucky  
In hunting, when with youthful Theban huntsmen  
He chaseth beasts of prey. But now his only  
Diversion is to fight against our God!  
Thou, father, must admonish him regarding  
His bigotry. Who now will call him hither  
Into my presence, that he may behold  
My fortune-favored self, supremely happy?

## KADMOS

Alas! When ye, my daughters, realize  
What ye have done, ye shall be overwhelmed

With anguish and remorse most terrible.  
If to the end of life ye should remain  
Ever in this delusion, though ill-fated,  
Ye would not seem to be accursed by Fate.

AGAVE

But what's amiss with us? What is thy trouble?

KADMOS

Ah! First lift up thine eyes to yonder heaven.

AGAVE

Well, then! Why dost thou bid me gaze on it?

KADMOS

Is it the same as hitherto, or doth  
It seem to thee to suffer subtle changes?

AGAVE

'Tis brighter, more divine than formerly.

KADMOS

Doth this delirium still possess thy soul?

AGAVE

That word I know not; though awhile I felt  
Lightheaded, now my mind is getting lucid.

KADMOS

Then canst thou somewhat hear, and answer sanely?

AGAVE

Why, really, father, I have quite forgotten  
What we were saying just awhile ago.

KADMOS

To what home didst thou come with wedding songs?

AGAVE

Thou gavest me in marriage to Echion,  
Sprung, so they say, from sown teeth of the Dragon.

KADMOS

Aye, surely; and within that home of thine  
Who is the son thou barest to thy lord?

AGAVE

Pentheus, who is his father's pride and mine.

KADMOS

Whose is the head thou'rt holding in thine arms?

AGAVE

A lion's, so the huntresses declared.

KADMOS

Then do thou now examine it with care;  
But little trouble 'tis to take a look.

AGAVE

Ha! What is this I see? Oh, what is this  
Which I am carrying, folded in mine arms?

KADMOS

Gaze thou on it, and make it out distinctly.

AGAVE

Wretch that I am! I see—most fearful anguish!

KADMOS

Quite like a lion doth it seem to thee?

AGAVE

Ah, no! Not that! It is the head of Pentheus  
That I, his anguished mother, am embracing.

KADMOS

By me bewailed ere recognized by thee.

AGAVE

Who killed him? To my hands how came his head?

KADMOS

Dread truth that came not at the proper time!

AGAVE

Speak, for my heart is throbbing with suspense.

KADMOS

'Twas thou! Thou and thy sisters murdered him.

AGAVE

Where did he die, at home, or in what place?

KADMOS

'Twas in the wooded glen where proud Aktaion  
Was torn to pieces by his yelping hounds.

AGAVE

But why did my poor boy go to Kithairon?

KADMOS

He mocked thy God, and thither went to spy  
Upon the mystic rites ye were performing.

AGAVE

And why had we resorted to that place?

KADMOS

Ye were possessed by strange religious frenzy,  
And all the city had been crazed by Bakcheus.

AGAVE

Ah, Dionysos now hath ruined us!  
At last my reeling mind doth comprehend.

KADMOS

Yet vilely ye calumniated him,  
For ye believed not that he is a God.

AGAVE

Where, father, is my son's most precious corpse?

KADMOS

After a toilsome search, I've brought it here.

AGAVE

Are all its members rightly put together?

KADMOS

[Aye; 'tis complete, now thou hast brought the head.]

AGAVE

And yet what share had Pentheus in my folly?

KADMOS

Like to yourselves was he, in that he heaped  
Indignities upon the God, who therefore  
Involved you all in one calamity,  
Thee and thy sisters, and thine only son,  
Bringing to utter ruin all our house  
And me, who had no manchild of mine own.  
And now, O wretched daughter, I behold  
The sole fruit of thy womb most shamefully  
And wickedly deprived of life. O son,  
Our house looked up to thee, my daughter's child,  
Maintainer of my lineage. To the city  
Thou wast its awe-commanding king, and none  
Who saw thy face dared treat with insolence  
Thy grandsire, for thou'dst punish him condignly.  
But now that I am rendered infamous  
I shall be banished from my home, yea I,  
Kadmos the Great, the Sower of the seed  
Whence sprang the Theban race, and Reaper of  
That splendid harvest. O thou dearest child,

For though thou art no more, thou shalt be counted  
 Among the ones who unto me are dearest,  
 Thou who wilt ne'er again, as was thy wont,  
 About my shoulders cast thy brawny arms,  
 Or stroke endearingly my bearded cheek,  
 And jovially call me "Mother's father,"  
 As in thy childhood's prattle, asking me,  
 "Doth any one affront or wrong thee, Sire?  
 Or doth some trouble-maker vex thy heart?  
 Speak, that I may chastise the miscreant."  
 But now I'm broken-hearted, thou art numbered  
 With the unhappy shades, thy mother waileth  
 In anguish, and her sisters are grief-crushed.  
 If any man there be who doth disdain  
 The Blest Immortals, let him well consider  
 This scorner's fate, and in the Gods believe.

## CHORUS

For thee I sorrow, Kadmos; yet, indeed,  
 The dreadful doom thy daughter's son hath met  
 Was well deserved, though grievous 'tis to thee.

## AGAVE

Father, thou seest how Fate hath turned on me—

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

[The ancient manuscript from which the text is solely derived is mutilated at this point, a leaf or more having been torn out. Some lines of the missing portion have been recovered from other sources, but not enough to restore the text. However, quotations from, and references to this passage, by ancient authors, show that after a lament of Agave over her dead son, the God Dionysos,

chorally announced, appears on a white cloud, and passes judgment on the house of Kadmos. The God makes it clear that Pentheus brought his doom upon himself, and that the daughters of Kadmos must likewise reap what they sowed. He adjudges that in expiation of their crime they are to be exiles till death, and that their father must share their banishment. In the lines following this gap in the text Dionysos is addressing Kadmos.]

*[Enter DIONYSOS on a white cloud, sitting like unto a son of man, and having on his head a golden crown.]*

## DIONYSOS

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Thou shalt be changed, and shalt become a Dragon;  
 Thy wife, Harmonia, whom thou didst receive  
 From Ares when thou wast as yet a mortal,  
 Shall like a creature of the wild become,  
 Taking a serpent's jointed spinal form.  
 Thou and thy wife shalt journey in a wagon  
 By bullocks drawn, and lead barbaric hordes,  
 So saith the oracle of Zeus, and shalt  
 Sack many cities with thy countless army;  
 But when they plunder the oracular  
 Seat of Apollo, they shall then begin  
 Their toilsome journey to their distant home.  
 But Ares shall become thy Saviour, shielding  
 Thee and Harmonia, and he shall assign  
 To thee a mansion in the land where dwell  
 The Blest Immortals. I, e'en Dionysos,  
 Sprung not from mortal father, but from Zeus,  
 Declare these things; but if ye had resolved,

What time ye would not, to control the mind  
 And garner wisdom, ye had now been blest,  
 Having the Son of Zeus for your protector.

AGAVE

Lord Dionysos, we implore thee now  
 To pardon our transgressions. Thee we wronged.

DIONYSOS

Too late do ye acknowledge me; for when  
 Ye should have welcomed me, ye knew me not.

AGAVE

We know it; but thy judgment's too severe!

DIONYSOS

For verily, when I, a God, appeared  
 Among you, ye despised and slandered me.

AGAVE

'Tis unbecoming that the deathless Gods  
 Should yield to anger, as do mortal men.

DIONYSOS

Of old my Father Zeus confirmed this judgment.

AGAVE

Alas! Mine aged father, 'tis decreed  
 That we as wretched exiles are to wander.

DIONYSOS

Why, then, delay that fate immutable?

[Exit.

KADMOS

My child, to what a dire and piteous pass  
 All we are come, thyself more hapless even



Than are thy sisters. I, in mine affliction,  
 A grey-haired refugee, must dwell with aliens.  
 Yet by divine decree I am appointed  
 To lead a multifarious foreign army  
 Against my native Hellas; and Harmonia,  
 My wife, the child of Ares, having taken  
 A Dragon's form and fierceness, I, a Dragon,  
 Commanding troops of spearmen, her shall lead  
 Against the altars and the tombs of Hellas.  
 And neither shall I make an end of woes,  
 Ah me! nor shall I cross the downward-rushing  
 River of Acheron, and be at peace.

AGAVE

Father, I shall be torn from thee, and banished.

KADMOS

Why fold me in thine arms, O hapless daughter?  
 A snow-white swan doth shield her plumeless sire!

AGAVE

Thrust from my native land, where can I turn?

KADMOS

I know not, child. Thy sire's a feeble helper.

AGAVE

O sheltering roof, O native city,  
 Farewell! An exile now, forlorn,  
 I must abandon, Oh, the pity!  
 The room wherein my son was born!

KADMOS

Child, to the home of Aristaïos go,  
 [And sadly there await

Autonoë, who like thyself doth know  
 A mother's anguish o'er her son's black fate.]

AGAVE

My father, thee I am bemoaning;  
 Alas, I dread the coming years!

KADMOS

For thee and for thy sisters groaning,  
 My child, I shed unceasing tears.

AGAVE

For Dionysos, giving proof  
 Of kingship o'er our lordly race,  
 On thee and all beneath thy roof  
 Hath brought this measureless disgrace.

KADMOS

But ye did first the God defame,  
 In Thebes, dishonoring his name.

AGAVE

Farewell, my father.

KADMOS

Child, farewell,  
 Who must in dreary exile dwell.

AGAVE

My sisters wait, who share my woe,  
 Sad exiles, from their homes uprooted:  
 Lead me to them. I fain would go  
 Where ne'er Kithairon, blood-polluted,  
 Might look upon me, and mine eyes  
 Might ne'er behold Kithairon's height,  
 And no memorial sanctifies  
 The thyrsus, of resistless might.

May other votaries of the God  
Be wielders of his magic rod.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



[The following song by the Chorus is given in the text as the conclusion of the play. It is found, however, with a slight variation at the end of four other of Euripides' dramas, and was probably transferred by the actors

from one play to another. Here it does not fit in very appropriately, and is a far less effective ending than the final words of Agave.]

## CHORUS

The mystic labors, God-controlled,  
Are multiform and manifold:  
Results that even hope might flout  
The Gods benignly bring about,  
And expectations that have thrilled  
The yearning heart are unfulfilled;  
But triumphs ne'er by mind conceived  
Are by the inner God achieved.  
In such wise, by divine intent,  
Befell this marvelous event.

PART III

THE PERFECTIVE WORK

The Practical Application of the Philosophy Embodied  
in the Myths



## THE PERFECTIVE WORK

### Becoming One with the Sun-God

The First-Principle of the Universe was termed in Greek mysticism the Monad, the "Alone." The immortal Self of each human being was said to be also a Monad, like unto, and inseparable from the Universal Monad. And each Monad was said to be a Triad: that is, it has three aspects, absolute Being, primordial Energy, and divine Mind. The divine Mind is personified as the Sun-God; and since it is through this spiritual Mind that man may achieve union with his true Self, the "Alone," and thus become emancipated from earthly bondage, the Sun-God was called the Saviour. Therefore in the Dionysiac religion the devotee strove by the perfective work to become one with Dionysos. The initiate in the Bakchic Mysteries became a Bakchos; but of old it was said, "Many are the thyrsus-bearers, but few are the Bakchoi." And in these degenerate days it must be said that few, very few, are the thyrsus-bearers, while the Bakchoi dwell in secluded places, apart from the herd of mankind. In the days of Euripides real schools of the Mysteries were maintained; but now there are none save in hidden localities which no profane explorer can ever reach. But the way is still open for any one to become a thyrsus-bearer, and even a Bakchos, if so he wills. And not a few are earnestly seeking true light, now that the Stygian gloom that for twenty centuries has rested like a fog over the earth is beginning to lift. In the fragments of ancient literature that have come

down to us a patient student may discover the initial instructions for the perfective work. Yet he must study them in the original tongues; because translations made by scholars who know not the esoteric meaning are quite worthless. And it is a task resembling that of Kadmos when gathering together the fragments of the body of Pentheus. However, from such sources I have gleaned a few practical instructions, which are here presented to the reader in plain English, free from Greek or Sanskrit words, as well as from the jargon of the mystics. For these instructions I claim no originality whatever; but I refrain from complicating the subject by quoting authorities, or by referring the reader to ancient works which would be of little help to him if he can read them only in empiric translations.

*Here, then, are set forth the initial steps to be taken in the perfective work.*

This work begins with the mind and ends with the Mind. For it has for its purpose the uniting of the purified reasoning mind with the divine Mind in which is the true Individuality of the man, his deathless Self. Therefore the perfective work is not concerned with externals, rites, ceremonies, postures, breath-control, or any of the superstitious practices of the "profane." Where possible, a certain time, not less than half an hour, daily, should be devoted to the work. Neither the physical body nor any of its functions has anything to do with the work; so, after placing the body in any posture which it can maintain with comfort, forget that it exists.

Of the moral virtues and other qualifications, nothing



need be said here. That subject has already been dealt with in the comments on the myth of Kadmos.

*Fix the mind firmly upon some subject worthy of adoration, and then exclude from it all thoughts, even thoughts concerning the subject toward which the mind is directed.*

The word "meditation" has by some writers on the subject been applied to this stage of the work. But in meditation one is plunged in deep thought; whereas in this work the mind must cease altogether from thinking, and become as blank as an unexposed photographic film. For in this preliminary practice the sole effort is to suppress all mental activity, so that the quiescent lower mind may become receptive of the influences it may receive from the higher Mind. If a subject that is not worthy of adoration be concentrated upon, incentive will be lacking, and there will be no response from the Self.

Through the physical senses man can not obtain knowledge of anything that is above and beyond the gross material world; and his reasoning mind, no matter how highly developed, can not cognize spiritual realities. However, he has latent subtle senses pertaining to higher worlds; and the powers of his divine Mind are unlimited. In this perfective work, therefore, the physical senses and the reasoning mind are of no avail; instead, they present obstacles that must be overcome.

By the power of the will, compel the mind to dwell upon the subject chosen for adoration, but without any thoughts whatever. The will is not a faculty of the mind, and can work independently; its true centre is

the heart. The mind is not the sum of the mental faculties; these faculties, or intellectual powers, are only the instruments used by the mind.

*When all thoughts are excluded, the mind reverts to its own pure essence, undiscolored, untransformed.*

When the mind is acting and employing its faculties it keeps creating or calling up subjective images, conforming itself to whatever subject it is engaged upon; it is, "like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in." But if, in this practice of adoration, all the faculties are for the time held in abeyance, the mind is then in its uncolored, unmodified state, and so becomes responsive to the higher Mind, to which its adoration is directed.

*But when the mind is engaged in thinking, its essence is discolored by, and transformed into the mental energies which it puts forth.*

So incessant is the activity of the mind that one would naturally conclude that if he were to suppress entirely both thought and sensation he would lapse into unconsciousness. However, in this work the waking consciousness is retained even after thought and sensation have ceased. In a later stage, though, there is an instant of unconsciousness when passing from one plane to another; yet sufficient hold must always be kept on the waking consciousness, so as to bring back to it whatever knowledge one may gain on the higher planes. The mind should be kept like a clear sheet of water that is perfectly still, waveless and unrippled; even the slightest exercise of its energies will roughen and make inadequate the

mirror-like surface which the lower mind must present toward the higher mind.

*These energies, which may react pleasantly or unpleasantly upon the mind, are: true reasoning, false reasoning, fantasy, sleep and memory.*

When the mind is concentrated on a chosen subject, and the will exerted to keep it undeviating, the tension of the nervous system that results stimulates the brain to increased activity: the very effort to stop thinking intensifies thought. Seizing upon the first idea that presents itself, the mind begins to reason about it, either accurately and coherently, or illogically, relying on erroneous perceptions and false premises; or again, following the line of least resistance, the mind idly passes on to an associated idea, and from that to another, and so on, until the idea it started with is lost sight of. Or it may indulge in flights of fancy, creating unreal images, and revelling in absurdities. It may subside into sleep, which means that the mind has passed on into the future, since sleep has everything to do with the future: nothing ever happens to man in the waking world that has not come to him first in the sleep-world, though happily this is veiled from his waking consciousness. Or the mind may seek to revive the past, calling up a succession of related memories.

These five energies of the lower mind correspond to the five great powers of the higher Mind, and to the five life-breaths and the five manifested subtile elements. Each of the mental energies is both positive and negative, and may give rise to either pleasure or pain.

*These activities of the mind should be suppressed by exerting the will unremittingly to keep the mind quiescent, and by disengaging the attention from everything save the subject toward which the mind is directed.*

Here the mind must be made subservient to the will. At first the undisciplined energies of the mind will tend almost incessantly to divert it from the subject of adoration; but this tendency must constantly be held in check by the will. At the instant the mind starts to stray, it should be brought back, not the slightest deflection being permitted. These energies are not only persistent, but also very subtle: when not permitted to think loudly, so to say, they subside into mere whispers of thought, which hardly ripple the surface of the mind, and may pass unnoticed. These also must be completely silenced.

*When the will has thus been trained to hold the mind in perfect quiescence, thereafter this state may be speedily reached each time the perfective work is resumed.*

The force of habit, the facility acquired by regular and cumulative effort, must be turned to advantage. A stated period for the work should be set aside, of not less than half an hour daily. Theoretically the morning, at sunrise, is the best time for this; but under the conditions of modern so-called civilized life one can only fix upon whatever hour of the day or night that may be most convenient. It is imperative, however, that the work should be regularly pursued; for sporadic efforts will prove futile. Later on, a longer time will have to be devoted to the exercise. But always precaution should be taken against being suddenly interrupted; for when

one is in a state of great nervous tension it is dangerous to be abruptly jarred out of it.

*There are three stages in the work, corresponding, in a general way, to waking, dreaming and dreamless slumber, and to the three lower worlds, physical, psychic and super-psychic; beyond these three is the consciousness of the spiritual Mind.*

One who practices diligently will find no very great difficulty in reaching the lower psychic planes of consciousness; it is vastly more difficult to gain the super-psychic planes, and it is only by the most intense adoration that the plane of the spiritual Mind may be attained. To reach any of the higher states, all the intervening states must necessarily be passed through; and in this preliminary practice anything suitable relating to the subjective worlds may be chosen as a subject for concentration. But the choice of a subject should not be tainted by any selfish motive: no attempt should ever be made to gain knowledge with a view to advancing one's personal interests, or for any other unworthy purpose.

*The supreme subject of adoration is the Self in its comprehensible aspect as the true Mind.*

Instead of directing the mind toward intermediate points on this steep upward path, it may be fixed on the summit, the final goal. All the steps on the path will have to be taken before the summit is gained; but he who keeps the goal constantly in view, and presses forward with the greatest adoration, will make speedier progress than those who, being of a less ardent nature, adopt an easier method of progress.

*The true Mind is an Immortal God, the Supernal Man, free from all the concerns of material existence.*

As has been said before, the triune Monad, the eternal Self of man, is absolute Being, or Consciousness, Mind and Energy. What is termed "matter," from the pristine divine substance down to the gross physical elements, is a manifestation of energy. Therefore energy, or force, and matter differ only in degree. In terms of mythology, Energy is the Mighty Mother, the Goddess of many names, as Gaia, Rhea, Themis, Demeter; while Mind, the Spiritual Ego of man, is the Son, Dionysos, the God of many names. But the primary aspect of this Trinity, when the Monad is considered cosmically, has no name, but is referred to only by such terms as Abstract Being (*To On*) or the Silence (*Sigē*); yet, though itself ever unmanifested, from it proceeds the Life-principle, which, personified as Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus, on three planes of existence, is the Father. Thus Dionysos, the true Ego, is the Son of Father Zeus, the divine Life-principle, and of Semele, who is but a variant of Gaia and Rhea. He is not the Son of Hera, since the latter represents the divine Energy only as manifested in the psychic world; therefore the Mysteries of Dionysos were connected with those of Rhea, the Mother in the world of true Intellect. In modern theology this Trinity has been grotesquely transformed into "Three Persons, of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," and as such is worshipped as the One God who created the Universe and man, but is distinct from his creation, which does not share in his "sub-

stance." Now, the theologian is welcome to his conception of a substantial personal Deity, which is probably the loftiest that his mind is capable of grasping, even as some men of still fewer incarnations can conceive of no higher God than one graven of wood or stone; so I do not quote his creed captiously or unkindly. Indeed, I think that his doctrine is far more ennobling than some of the formulated beliefs put forward in certain other religions, such, for instance, as that which denies conscious immortality to man, giving him only a temporary self-hood which he eventually loses by slipping like a "dew-drop" into "the shining sea." The religionist who thus aspires to destroy his individual consciousness by drowning it in a nebulous world-soul is insanely attempting to commit spiritual suicide. The perfective work does not aim at self-destruction; on the contrary, its purpose is to attain conscious immortality through union with one's own true Self, his supernal Monad. The adorer of Bakchos strives to become Bakchos, and not at all to be dissolved in the Mighty Mother and lose his identity. But this perfective work is, necessarily, impossible for one who believes that he is only a "creature," distinct and apart from his "Creator"; for by holding to that belief he is repudiating his own divine Self, and erecting an impassable barrier between his lower mind and his spiritual Mind.

*Boundless is the wisdom of the spiritual Mind; whereas in the psychic mind there is but the seed of knowledge.*

The pure Mind, unhampered by the senses, can by its inherent energy take knowledge direct from its source,

without employing any intermediary faculties; and this power of direct cognition may be gained by the lower mind on its own plane, once the senses and the desires are stilled. The scope of the higher Mind extends throughout the entire period of cosmic activity, while the range of the lower mind is limited to a single incarnation. Yet it would be erroneous to call the latter the "finite mind," since it is of the same essence as, and may be unified with the higher Mind.

*Every holy Sage, from time immemorial, who received the sacred Mysteries, was taught them by his Eternal Mind, his God-Self.*

It is a primary principle of the arcane philosophy that all knowledge comes from within, not from without. A teacher can not really infuse knowledge into the mind of a pupil; he can only impart information and in various ways stimulate the pupil's mental faculties. But unless the pupil already has a subconscious grasp of the information it will mean nothing to him. As Plato says, all knowledge is reminiscence—which implies that, as Solomon says, there is nothing new under the sun. It also means that nothing that a man learns through the senses is actually new to him; for, deep within his subconsciousness he already knows it. That is why persons so often have premonitions of coming disasters and sorrows. Time tenderly deadens past sorrows and veils the coming ones; otherwise mortals would be crushed by the accumulated burden of grief, and frantic with dread of what Fate holds in store. Only when man has risen



above earthly cares is it safe for him to acquire the power of seeing into the future.

The Teacher of the candidate for the Mysteries is his own spiritual Self; but, since the spiritual Selves of men, the Monads, are inseverably linked to the Universal Monad, and are thus occultly related, the Self of the Hierophant, or Initiator in the Mysteries, was said to take the place, temporarily, of the candidate's inner God. Thus even in the exoteric ritual the officiating priests personified the various Gods. In the Apocalyptic drama, when the initiated candidate fell down before the feet of the Hierophant to adore him, the Hierophant said, "See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant of thee and of thy Brothers, the Seers: adore thy God."

*He is the Lord of the supernal Light, the Master of the seven magic Sounds.*

Light in the physical world, that which is received from the sun and other luminaries, is but the dim reflection of the all-pervasive Light of the inner worlds, visible only to Seers. Light is the primary element; even in *Genesis* the first fiat of the Demiurge is, "Let there be Light." Sound is a form-producing force; and the seven occult sounds in the Æther (which is the Light) bring into manifestation the first differentiated elements. Certain words and word-combinations may be employed in evoking these.

*There are three successive stages in the work, unflagging attention, perfect quiescence of the mind, and waking trance; these three, when the purpose is to gain knowledge of aught in the worlds of form, constitute lucidity.*

All action of the mind save steadfast attention having ceased, while consciousness is fully retained, the mind becomes a reflector of whatever the attention has been directed upon, and gains knowledge thereof. The physical senses being abeyant, the psychic senses come into play. Perception is gained of the inner world, while still remaining cognizant of the outer world; hence the knowledge gained is stored up in the mind when return is made to the ordinary waking state.

*There are ascending degrees of lucidity, concurrent with the transition from lower to higher planes; they precede, and rise gradually up to the state of spiritual illumination in the formless world of pure Mind.*

Three trance-states are enumerated, corresponding to (but not the same as) waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep; and each of these has three corresponding phases. They relate to the physical, psychic, and super-psychic worlds. Beyond these is the world of true intellect, to be cognized in a fourth trance-state, in which the mind becomes unified with the spiritual Mind. It is apparent that the final state can be reached only after a long period of Titanic toil, and that the final achievement is one of almost inconceivable glory.

Progress by the mental exercise of lucidity, as above outlined, is necessarily accompanied by a process of purifying and revivifying the brain and nervous system, and for this reason, among others, all the stages have to be passed through; to reach the higher ones prematurely would almost certainly result in the death of the physical body. When the waking trance-state is reached,

the psychic life-forces, which are far more intense than the nerve-forces, are liberated, and bring into play the psychic senses. Acting on the visual centres of the brain, these psychic elements are seen as a brilliant light, with all the colors of the rainbow, colors that coalesce in a steady white light, that of the psychic world. The psychic forces, by purifying and tuning up the nervous system and the brain, prepare the way for the vastly more powerful forces through which the higher Mind acts. The psychic forces have been likened to water, and the higher energies to fire; and the purification by water must precede the baptism of fire, the vital electricity which is emblemized by the thyrsus of Dionysos, the God of Seership. In the Eleusinian ceremonial the candidates for the Lesser Mysteries were baptized in the river Ilissos by the Hydranos, the Water-initiator, who thus personified Zeus, who is represented in the zodiac as the Water-pourer, Aquarius (Hydrochoös). But the Son of Zeus, who is mightier than his Father, baptizes in the Great Breath and in Fire; and the Greater Mysteries were those of Dionysos and Demeter.

*When lucidity is attained, and the psychic senses are awakened, the power of cognition becomes correspondingly increased.*

Passing from the physical to the psychic plane of perception, all the faculties of the mind operate with greater freedom and rapidity. Knowledge then comes, not by the usual laborious processes of thought, but in quick flashes, intuitive and certain. In the waking state the mind can only walk, often only trudge; but in the psychic

state it flies, sometimes with incredibly speed. This accession of insight and acumen increases with each successive stage of trance-lucidity, until the mind becomes independent of all sense-impressions and ratiocination, and then takes knowledge by direct grasp.

The only object of this brief disquisition is to indicate the first steps to be taken in the perfective work, of which the goal, never to be lost sight of, is union with one's divine Self, and consequent emancipation from earth-life. Until the beginner has mastered these preliminary exercises, and can enter at will into the state of lucidity, the theoretic study of the higher stages of the work will be of little help to him; nor will the above instructions advance him on the mystic path if he does not assiduously put them in practice. For this work is altogether practical, and is therefore the reverse of speculative reasoning and religious emotionalism. It is *work*, and the faithful worker gets results. Even in these primary exercises strange experiences may be expected, and some dangers are to be encountered. So the above instructions will now be supplemented by a few particulars of what may be experienced at the outset.

As the inner worlds are even more densely peopled than is the outer world, he who enters any of these worlds will find many races of beings there, and concerning these there seems to be a conspiracy of silence on the part of all authentic writers on the subject. They tell but little, and that little is usually quite misleading. So far as humanity is concerned, the Mysteries of life are in the possession of wise Custodians, and are kept beyond

the reach of the "profane," not only in the material world, but also in all worlds below the realm of the spiritual Mind. Therefore on all the lower planes of existence the avenues of knowledge are adequately guarded, and no one need expect to receive aught that he does not merit. His own divine Self, his Teacher if he is morally deserving, will otherwise bar him from the knowledge forbidden to the unworthy. Theoretically, all things are written in the great Book of Nature, the Æther; but that book is sealed to him who is not entitled to read it, and no one who may read its pages ever betrays the mysteries therein recorded. Divine Nature thus admirably arranges that knowledge is accessible to those who are fit to grasp it, but is forever beyond the reach of the unfit.

Possibly the Custodians of the Mysteries have been over-cautious in guarding them, even when they have seen fit to reveal a few truths for the benefit of individuals who may have risen a little above the herd of mankind. Yet if they have indeed been over-cautious, that is far better than if they had injudiciously revealed too much. Myths and cryptic utterances, while unintelligible to the uninitiated, are very instructive to those who wrest their meaning from them. When an ancient writer, unusually communicative, who wrote a few pages of laconic instructions on this subject, in highly condensed Sanskrit, says, "*By practicing lucidity with regard to the light in the head comes the power of seeing spiritual beings,*" his statement conveys very little meaning unless you do what he tells you to do. He does not stop to explain what the divine Light in the head is, or to enumerate and

describe the many races of beings who inhabit the superior worlds; he wisely leaves you to find all that out for yourself, after telling you how. Again, when he says, "*By practicing lucidity with regard to the Moon comes a knowledge of the lunar mansions,*" he has thickly veiled his meaning. For the Moon is a subject on which a severe silence is maintained, though the ancient myth-makers really tell a great deal about it in their cryptic language. Far be it from my humble self to attempt to throw any light on this forbidden subject; yet I shall venture to say that any one who successfully practices lucidity with regard to the Moon will discover that the modern astronomers are very much mistaken in their notions about the silvery Queen of Night. He who said, "In my Father's house are many mansions," might very well have added, "In my Mother's house are also many mansions." It may be said, quite harmlessly, that the Moon has everything to do with generation, and no one who has effectively practiced lucidity with regard to the Moon can ever entertain any doubts as to the truth of reincarnation.

Concerning the psychic forces and their relation to the nerve-centres much may be learned, theoretically, from books on the subject; but, unfortunately, a five-inch shelf would easily hold all the genuine ones, while a five-foot shelf would not hold the spurious ones. The ancient Sage who wrote the laconic instructions above referred to barely mentions the forces, evidently considering it unnecessary to explain about them, inasmuch as they become manifested naturally when the perfective

work is seriously undertaken. At the very start the psychic colors become visible, if the soul of the beginner is at all ripe for this work; when these colors blend, becoming a steady light, pictures of all sorts, in colors more or less brilliant, appear. But they are merely pictures, things reflected in the æther, and always they are reversed, as if seen in a mirror. Next animated beings are perceived, including the so-called spirits of the dead and the Nature-spirits, of a low order, whose acquaintance should not be cultivated; rather they should be avoided, kept at a distance. Beings of a higher order will be encountered further on, and the persevering beginner may have many and marvelous experiences; but if he allows his mind to dwell too much on such matters, or yields to the allurements presented to his psychic nature, his progress will be stayed. For these lower psychic regions, equally with the material world, belong to the realm of mortality, of impermanence: all are spheres of generation. Only when the psychic energies give way to the divine Power of the true Mind can he ascend to the world of spiritual realities. When that Power manifests itself he will realize what is emblemized by the thyrsus of Dionysos, the God of Seership.

The purpose of the perfective work is to rise above the worlds of generation and become one with the true Self, the divine Individuality of the man. For the members of the herd are not really individualized, save in their physical personalities, being psychically infantile, though in each and every one of them is an inextinguishable spark of the Divine. Now, the beginner, before

entering upon the work, should make sure that he no longer desires the things of this world, and is ready to isolate himself from the herd. If he still craves bodily existence and association with other members of the herd, let him remain with them, for it is with them that he belongs. Than the man who seeks to obtain "occult" or spiritual knowledge with the purpose of gaining wealth or anything whatever that may be used to his personal advantage in the physical world there is no blinder fool in all the spheres of generation. Unfortunately, there are many who thus ignorantly fancy that they can pilfer from the spiritual nature powers that they wish to pervert to ignoble ends; and almost invariably they become the dupes of rapacious charlatans, who empty the purses and ruin the souls of their victims. The most malignant denizens of the lower psychic regions are less to be feared than these vile pretenders to "occult" knowledge.

By isolating himself from the herd, the mass-mankind in the outer world, one does not sever himself from humanity in its divine nature; on the contrary, in striving to unify himself with his spiritual Ego he draws nearer also to the spiritual Egos of his fellow-mortals. It is only by this isolation in the spheres of generation that he can come into communion with his God and the Gods who are the Immortal Selves of mortal men, whose "mortality," after all, is only illusory, since it is but the outer form that dies and is renewed by birth, whereas the true Self, the real Man, is unborn and undying.



PART IV

GLOSSARY

Gods, Persons and Places Found in the Drama and the  
Introduction



## GLOSSARY

ACHELOOS, the largest river in Greece, fabled to be the source of all the other streams and fountains of that land. Every river had its God, and all the River-Gods were sons of Okeanos and Tethys. The meaning simply is that Okeanos is the Ocean of Life, the totality of animated beings, and his wife, Tethys ("Nurse," or "Mother") is the Earth; the rivers, therefore, are the races of mankind. The word Acheloös, is sometimes used by the poets for fresh water in general.

AGAVE, daughter of Kadmos, wife of Echion and mother of Pentheus. She personifies the subtle element Fire.

AGENOR, son of Poseidon and father of Kadmos. His name, signifying "Manly," identifies him as a variant of Ares, the War-God, whose name holds the same meaning.

AIGYPTOS (*Ægyptus*), son of Belos and twin-brother of Danaos.

AKTAION (*Actæon*), son of Aristaios and Autonöë. Changed into a stag by Artemis for having boasted that he excelled her in hunting, he was torn to pieces by his fifty (esoterically five) hounds.

ANNA, the Phœnician Heaven-goddess, corresponding to the Hera of the Greeks.

APHRODITE (Venus), the Goddess of Love and Beauty, the daughter (according to Hesiod) of Ouranos, born from the foam of the sea; hence she was called Ourania, the Heavenly One, and was worshipped as a Sea-Goddess.

APOLLON (Apollo), son of Zeus and Leto, and twin-brother of Artemis. Originally the Moon-God, constituting with his sister Artemis, the Moon-Goddess, a lunar diad, he was in later mythology confused with Helios and so converted into a Sun-God. But all his attributes are lunar (psychic), and he is the male counterpart of Artemis. He is the Bearer of the Silver Bow (the crescent Moon), even as Artemis has her deadly bow and arrows; and the Twins have everything to do with birth and death.

ARES (Mars), the War-God, son of Zeus and Hera. Originally the God of storms and turmoil, of strife and struggle.

ARISTAIOS (Aristæus), husband of Autonoë and father of Aktaion. He personifies the virtue Courage.

ARTEMIS (Diana), the Moon-Goddess, the twin-sister and female counterpart of Apollon.

ATHAMAS, husband of Ino. He personifies the virtue Self-control.

ATHENA (Minerva), daughter of Zeus and his first wife, Metis ("Wisdom"), daughter of Okeanos and Tethys. When Metis was with child Zeus swallowed her, and her child, Athena, was born from his head, even as Dionysos was born from his "thigh." She was called

Tritogeneia, "Born from the Three," the triple current of force, emblemized by the caduceus of Hermes, as also by the thyrsus of Dionysos, which passes up the spinal cord and energizes the occult brain-centres during the sacred trance. Among her other titles, she was termed Parthenos or Pallas, "the Virgin," and Sotereia, "the Saviouress." She personifies the light in the head, as Hephaistos does the æther in the heart. (See HEPHAISTOS.)

AUTONOE, daughter of Kadmos, wife of Aristaios and mother of Aktaion. She personifies the subtle element Water.

BAKCHEUS, Bakchos (Bacchus), also named Dionysos, known as "the God of Many Names." He is the personification of man's Immortal Self. Initiates in his Mysteries were called Bakchoi, inasmuch as the initiate becomes one with his Immortal Self. The Bakchai (feminine) in Euripides' drama of that name are the female disciples of Bakchos.

BELOS (Belus), son of Poseidon and Libya, and twin-brother of Agenor. He was fabled to be the founder of Babylon. His name is the Greek form of the Babylonian Bel, the Phœnician Baal, "the Lord." Bel, as Lord of the Ghost-world, is the same as the Greek Plouton (Pluto), and governs the Scorpio-quarter of the zodiac.

BROMIOS, "Sounding," a surname of Dionysos.

CHEIRON (Chiron), a centaur famous as a healer.

CORYBANTES (Greek, Korybantes), priests of the Mighty Mother, Kybele or Rhea.

CURETES (Greek, Kouretes), mythical warrior-priests to whose care Rhea is said to have intrusted the infant Zeus.

DANAOS (Danaus), son of Belos and twin-brother of Aigyptos.

DEMETER (Ceres), daughter of Kronos and Rhea. She is an aspect of Gaia, the divine Energy from which springs the objective side of nature, visible and invisible.

DIONYSOS. (See BAKCHEUS.)

DIRKE (Dirce), a fountain and brook near Thebes.

ECHION, one of the Sown Men, husband of Agave and father of Pentheus. He personifies the virtue Righteousness.

EPAPHOS (Epaphus), son of Io, conceived of the Holy Breath of Zeus. His name signifies "Touch"; all the senses are specialized forms of touch, which is therefore the "parent of all the senses."

EURIPIDES, tragic poet, son of Mnesarchides and Kleito; born 480 B.C., died 406 B.C. (The Parian Marble gives the date of his birth as 485 B.C.) His parents were natives of Phyla in Attica, but on the invasion of Xerxes they fled to the island of Salamis, and there Euripides was born, it is said, on the very day of the great battle of Salamis, when the Greeks destroyed the Persian fleet. In his youth he was devoted to gymnastics, and also gained considerable fame as a painter;

but early in life he gave up athletics and art for the study of philosophy, becoming a pupil of Anaxagoras, and associating with Sokrates and other famous philosophers. A man of wide learning, he possessed a very valuable library. Although he is said to have begun writing when only eighteen years of age, he was nearly thirty when his first play was produced, and most of his dramas were written after his fiftieth year. Of the more than ninety plays written by him only nineteen have come down to us. In his seventy-third year he left Athens, and was received as an honored guest at the court of Achelaus, the king of Macedonia. At his death all Athens, following the example set by Sophokles, put on mourning.

GAIA, the first Goddess, wife of Ouranos and mother of the Titan-Gods. She personifies the alchemical "Earth," the divine Energy which manifests all degrees of substance, down to gross matter.

HARMONIA, daughter of Ares and Aphrodite, and wife of Kadmos.

HELLAS, Greece. Hellenes, Greeks.

HEPHAISTOS (Vulcan), God of Fire. According to Homer, he was the son of Zeus and Hera; but in later mythology, where he is associated with Athena, who was born from the head of Zeus, he was the son of Hera only, being immaculately conceived. He personifies the fire in the heart, as Athena does the light in the head. (See ATHENA.)

HERA (Juno), wife of Zeus. She represents the pristine substance (Gaia) in the psychic world.

HERAKLES (Hercules), son of Zeus and Alkmene, celebrated as the greatest of heroes, and ranked among the Gods. He performed the twelve great labors, each connected with a sign of the zodiac, and was translated to the heavens. He is a mythological representation of a man going through the trials and toils of initiation in the Mysteries: that is, of a man transforming himself into a God. Like Dionysos and Teiresias, he was born in the sacred city of Thebes.

HERMES (Mercury), son of Zeus and Maia ("Mother"), messenger and herald of the Gods, conductor of the souls of the dead, God of eloquence, and interpreter of visions and mysteries. His kerykeion (caduceus), a winged herald's staff with two serpents twined about it, has nearly the same significance as the thyrsus. He is represented with wings on his hat and sandals, to indicate the speed with which he travels.

HESTIA (Vesta), daughter of Kronos and Rhea, was the Goddess of the Hearth-fire, and Regent of the sign Capricorn, the southern gate of the Zodiac, opposite the northern gate, Cancer, of which Hermes is the Regent.

LISSOS (Ilissus), a small river near Athens. In it candidates for the Lesser Mysteries were baptized.

INO, daughter of Kadmos, wife of Athamas and mother of Melikertes. She personifies the subtle element Air.

IO, a priestess of Hera who was transformed into a horned heifer and became the mother of Epaphos. She is a mythological personification of the reincarnating soul.



ISMENOS (Ismenus), a small river rising in Mount Kithairon and flowing through Thebes. The brook Dirke flows into it.

KADMOS (Cadmus), son of Agenor and Telephassa, and founder of Thebes.

KILIX, brother of Kadmos.

KITHAIRON (Cithæron), a mountain in Bœotia, sacred to Dionysos, and the reputed haunt of the Muses.

KYBELE (Cybele), a Phrygian Goddess, identified with Rhea.

LIBYA, daughter of Epaphos, and mother of Agenor and Belos.

MYSTERIES, the sacred truths revealed to those who make themselves worthy to receive them.

NYMPHS, various beings in the psychic world.

OLYMPOS, a mountain in Thessaly on the border of Macedonia. It was fabled to be the abode of the twelve great Gods, each of whom possessed one of its peaks: thus it represented the zodiac, and the name Olympus was also applied to the vault of the sky.

ORPHEUS, the reputed founder of the Orphic Mysteries, which were essentially the same as the Dionysiac Mysteries.

OURANOS (Uranus), the first of the Gods, paired with Gaia.

PAKTOLOS, a gold-bearing river rising in Mount Tmolos.

PALAMEDES, a mythical personage to whom many inventions are ascribed. From his name, derived from *palmē*, "hand," and signifying one who is skilful, he appears to be a personification of the inventive faculty.

PAN, the God of shepherds, herdsmen, and country folks in general, of agriculture, hunting and other rural occupations, of green fields and mountains. He was usually represented as a hairy man, with the ears, horns and legs of a goat, and playing on a shepherd's pipe of seven reeds. His name signifies "All," and according to a Homeric Hymn he was so called because he "delighted all," which is quite true, since his obvious connection with the zodiacal sign Capricorn, the Gate of Birth, shows him to be a personification of physical nature.

PENTHEUS, son of Echion and Agave, and king of Thebes after Kadmos. He personifies the vice Self-righteousness.

POLYDOROS, son of Kadmos; more correctly, a daughter, Polydora, personifying the subtle element Earth.

POSEIDON (Neptune), son of Kronos and Rhea, and God of the Sea.

PROMETHEUS, the Giver of Fire to Mortals. As related by Aischylos, he saved mankind from being destroyed and cast into Hades by Zeus, the Monarch of the Gods. Prometheus personifies the divine Self of man.

RHEA, wife of Kronos and mother of Zeus. She is the Great Mother, a lower aspect of Gaia, "Earth."

Her name is supposed to be derived by transposition from *era* (Latin, *terra*), "earth."

SATYRS, Sylvan Deities with goat-characteristics, connected with the worship of Dionysos. They were said to be the sons of Hermes and Iphthemia ("the Strong"), and were dreaded by mortals.

SEMELE, daughter of Kadmos and mother of Dionysos. She personifies the subtile element *Æther*.

TEIRESIAS, the blind seer who is almost ubiquitous in Greek mythology and legends. He was born in Thebes, and was blind from his seventh year. He personifies the intuitive faculty.

TELEPHASSA, wife of Agenor and mother of Kadmos. She is a variant of Aphrodite.

THEBES, an ancient city in Bœotia, fabled to have been founded by Kadmos, more celebrated in mythical annals than any other city in Greece. In mythology it represented the brain, its wall with seven gates being the cranium with its seven orifices. Hence it was the birth-place of Dionysos, Herakles and Teiresias.

THYRSUS, the wand of Dionysos, usually a hollow reed, the narthex, tipped with a pine-cone, and wrapped with ivy and vine-leaves. Like the caduceus of Hermes, it emblemized the spinal cord and the occult "fires" which energize the pineal body.

TIMBREL (*tympanon*), a kettle-drum, tabor or tambourine, in use from the earliest times.

TMOLOS, a mountain in Lydia near Sardis, sacred to Dionysos.

TYPHON, a giant who defied the Gods, but was smitten by the thunderbolt of Zeus and buried under Mount Ætna. He personifies the volcanic fires in the earth, and the passional nature of man.

ZEUS (Jupiter), son of Kronos and Rhea, and King of the Olympian Gods. He ruled the Heaven, while his two brothers, Poseidon and Hades (Pluto), were Regents of the Sea and the Underworld.

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I. Pryse, James Morgan, 1895. II. Euripides. Bacchae. English. III. Title. IV. Title: Bacchae. English.

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